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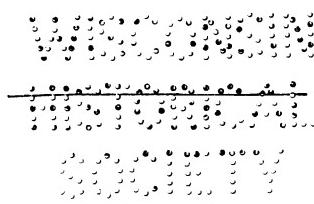
# “GOMBO ZHÈBES.”

## LITTLE DICTIONARY OF CREOLE PROVERBS,

SELECTED FROM SIX CREOLE DIALECTS.

TRANSLATED INTO FRENCH AND INTO ENGLISH, WITH NOTES, COMPLETE INDEX  
TO SUBJECTS AND SOME BRIEF REMARKS UPON THE CREOLE  
IDIOMS OF LOUISIANA.

BY  
LAFCADIO HEARN.



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MISSOURI  
JACKSON  
MICHIGAN

## INTRODUCTION.

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Any one who has ever paid a flying visit to New Orleans probably knows something about those various culinary preparations whose generic name is "Gombo"—compounded of many odds and ends, with the okra-plant, or true gombo for a basis, but also comprising occasionally "lösé, zepinard, laitie," and the other vegetables sold in bunches in the French market. At all events any person who has remained in the city for a season must have become familiar with the nature of "gombo filé," "gombo févi," and "gombo aux herbes," or as our colored cook calls it, "gombo zhèbes—for she belongs to the older generation of Creole *cuisinières*, and speaks the patois in its primitive purity, without using a single "r." Her daughter, who has been to school, would pronounce it *gombo zhairbes*:—the modern patois is becoming more and more Frenchified, and will soon be altogether forgotten, not only throughout Louisiana, but even in the Antilles. It still, however, retains originality enough to be understood with difficulty by persons thoroughly familiar with French; and even those who know nothing of any language but English, readily recognize it by the peculiarly rapid syllabification and musical intonation. Such English-speaking residents of New Orleans seldom speak of it as "Creole": they call it *gombo*, for some mysterious reason which I have never been able to explain satisfactorily. The colored Creoles of the city have themselves begun to use the term to characterize the patois spoken by the survivors of slavery days. Turiault tells us that in the towns of Martinique, where the Creole is gradually changing into French, the *Bilacos*, or country negroes who still speak the patois nearly pure, are much ridiculed by their municipal brethren:—"Ça ou ka palé id, ché, c'est nèg:—Ça pas Crôle! "What you talk is 'nigger,' my dear:—that isn't Creole!"") In like manner a young Creole negro or negress of New Orleans might tell an aged member of his race:—"Ça qui to parlé ça pas Crôle: ça c'est gombo!" I have sometimes heard the pure and primitive Creole also called "Congo" by colored folks of the new generation.

The literature of "gombo" has perhaps even more varieties than there are preparations of the esculents above referred to:—the patois has certainly its gombo févi, its gomo filé, its "gombo zhèbes"—both written and unwritten. A work like Marbot's "Bambous" would deserve to be classed with the pure "févi";—the treatises of Turiault, Baissac, St. Quentin, Thomas, rather resemble that fully prepared dish, in which crabs seem to struggle with fragments of many well-stewed meats, all strongly seasoned with pepper. The present essay at Creole folklore, can only be classed as "gombo zhèbes"—(Zhèbes çé feuil-chou, cresson, laitie, betti av, lösé, zepinard);—the true okra is not the basis of our preparation;—it is a Creole dish, if you please, but a salmagundi of inferior quality.

\* \* \*

For the collection of Louisiana proverbs in this work I am almost wholly indebted to my friend Professor William Henry, Principal of the Jefferson Academy in New Orleans; not a few of the notes, Creole quotations, and examples of the local patois were also contributed by him. The sources of the other proverbs will be found under the head of Creole

**Bibliography.** The translations of the proverbs into French will greatly aid in exhibiting the curious process of transformation to which the negro slave subjected the language of his masters, and will also serve to show the peculiar simplicity of Creole grammar. My French is not always elegant, or even strictly correct;—for with the above object in view it has been necessary to make the translation as literal as is possible without adopting the interlinear system. Out of nearly five hundred proverbs I selected about three hundred and fifty only for publication—some being rejected because of their naïve indecency, others because they offered mere variations of one and the same maxim. Even after the sifting process, I was partly disappointed with the results; the proportion of true Creole proverbs—proverbs of indubitably negro invention—proved to be much smaller than I had expected. Nevertheless all which I have utilized exhibit the peculiarities of the vernacular sufficiently to justify their presence.

\* \* \*

While some of these proverbs are witty enough to call a smile to the most serious lips, many others must, no doubt, seem vapid, enigmatic, or even meaningless. But a large majority of negro sayings depend altogether upon application for their color or their effectiveness; they possess a chameleon power of changing hue according to the manner in which they are placed. (See for examples: Prov. 181, 251, or 308.) Every saying of this kind is susceptible of numerous applications; and the art of applying one proverb to many different situations is one in which the negro has no rival—not even among the Arabs themselves, whose use of such folklore has been so admirably illustrated by Carlo Landberg.

\* \* \*

No two authors spell the Creole in the same way; and three writers whom I have borrowed largely from—Thomas, Baissac, and Turlault—actually vary the orthography of the same word in quite an arbitrary manner. At first I thought of remodeling all my proverbs according to the phonetic system of spelling; but I soon found that this would not only disguise the Creole etymology almost beyond recognition, but would further interfere with my plan of arrangement. Finally I concluded to publish the Creole text almost precisely as I had found it, with the various spellings and peculiarities of accentuation. The reader will find *cabrit*, for example, written in four or five different ways. Where the final *t*—never pronounced in our own patois—is fully sounded, the several authorities upon Creole grammar have indicated the fact in various fashions: one spelling it *cabritt*; another *cabrite*, etc.

\* \* \*

The grammatical peculiarities and the pronunciation of the several Creole dialects are matters which could not be satisfactorily treated within the compass of a small pamphlet. Some few general rules might, indeed, be mentioned as applying to most Creole dialects. It is tolerably safe to say that in no one of the West Indian dialects was the French “*r*” pronounced in former days; it was either totally suppressed, as in the word “*fôce*” (*force*), or exchanged for a vowel sound, as in *bouanche* (for *branche*). The delicate and difficult French sound of *u* was changed into *ou*; the sound *en* was simplified into *é*; the clear European *o* became a nasal *au*; and into many French words containing the sound of *am*, such as *amour*, the negro wedged the true African *n*, making the singular Creole pronunciation *lanmou*, *cammarade*, *janmahn*. But the black slaves from the Ivory and Gold Coasts, from Congo or Angola, pronounced differently. The Eboes and Mandingoes spoke the patois with varying accentuations;—it were therefore very difficult to define rules of pronunciation applicable to the patois spoken in all parts of one island like Guadalupe, or one colonial province like Guyana. Not so in regard to grammar. In all forms of the patois (whether the musical and peculiarly picturesque Creole of Martinique, or the more fantastic Creole of Mauritius,

adulterated with Malgache and Chinese words)—the true article is either suppressed or transformed into a prefix or affix of the noun, as in *femme-la* “the woman,” or *yon lagrimace*, a grimace;—there is no true gender, no true singular and plural; verbs have rarely more than six tenses—sometimes less—and the tense is not indicated by the termination of the verb; there is a remarkable paucity of auxiliaries, and in some dialects none whatever; participles are unknown, and prepositions few. A very fair knowledge of comparative Creole grammar and pronunciation may be acquired, by any one familiar with French, from the authors cited at the beginning of this volume. I would also recommend those interested in such folklore to peruse the Creole novel of Dr. Alfred Mercier—*Les Saint-Ybars*, which contains excellent examples of the Louisiana dialect; and Baissac's beautiful little stories, “Recits Créoles,” rich in pictures of the old French colonial life. The foreign philological reviews and periodicals, especially those of Paris, have published quite a variety of animal fables, proverbs, stories in various Creole dialects; and among the recent contributions of French ethnologists to science will be also discovered some remarkable observations upon the actual formation of various patois—strongly resembling our own Creole—in the French African colonies.

\* \* \*

Needless to say this collection is far from perfect;—the most I can hope for is that it may constitute the nucleus of a more exhaustive publication to appear in course of time. No one person could hope to make a really complete collection of Creole proverbs—even with all the advantages of linguistic knowledge, leisure, wealth, and travel. Only a society of folklorists might bring such an undertaking to a successful issue; but as no systematic effort is being made in this direction, I have had no hesitation in attempting—not indeed to fill a want—but to set an example. *Goule passé, dîl sivré*:—let the needle but pass, the thread will follow.

L. H.



## CREOLE BIBLIOGRAPHY.

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**[2]** The selection of Haytian proverbs in this collection was made by kindly permission of Messrs. Harper Bros., from the four articles contributed by Hon. John Bigelow, to HARPER'S MAGAZINE, 1875. The following list includes only those works consulted or quoted from in the preparation of this dictionary, and comprises but a small portion of all the curious books, essays, poems, etc., written upon, or in the Creole patois of the Antilles and of Louisiana.—L. H.

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**BIGELOW (HON. JOHN)**—“The Wit and Wisdom of the Haytians.” Being four articles upon the Creole Proverbs of Hayti, respectively published in the June, July, August and September numbers of HARPER'S MAGAZINE, 1875.



## Little Dictionary of Creole Proverbs.

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[*Most of the proverbs quoted in Martinique are current also in Guadaloupe, only 90 miles distant. All proverbs recognized in Louisiana are marked by an asterisk (\*). The indications, MAURITIUS, GUYANA, MARTINIQUE, HAYTI, etc., do not necessarily imply origin; they refer only to the dialects in which the proverbs are written, and to the works from which they are selected.*]

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1. Acoma tombé toutt mounn di: C'est bois pourri. (Quand l'Acoma est tombé, tout le monde dit: C'est du bois pourri.)  
“When the Acoma has fallen everybody says: ‘It’s only rotten wood.’”<sup>1</sup>—[Mart.]
2. A fòce macaque caressé yche li ka touffé li. (À force de caresser son petit le macaque l'étouffe.)  
“The monkey smothers its young one by hugging it too much.”—[Mart.]
3. Aspèrèz iéve dans marmite avant causé. (Attendez que le lièvre soit dans la marmite avant de parler.)  
“Wait till the hare’s in the pot before you talk.”—Don’t count your chickens before they’re hatched.—[Mauritius.]
4. Avant bois d’Inde té pôté graine, macaque té nourri yche yo. (Avant que l’arbre d’Inde portait des graines, les macaques nourissaient leurs petits.)  
“Before the Indian tree (?) bore seed the monkeys were able to nourish their young.”—[Martinique.]
5. Avant zabocat macaque ka nourri yche li. (Avant qu’il y eût des avocados, les macaques nourissaient leurs petits.)  
“The monkey could nourish it young, before there were any avocados.”<sup>4</sup>—[Martinique.]

<sup>1</sup> The Acoma, says Turiault, is one of the grandest trees in the forests of the Antilles. The meaning of the proverb appears to be, that a powerful or wealthy person who meets with misfortune is at once treated with contempt by those who formerly sought his favor or affected to admire his qualities.

<sup>2</sup> Evidently a creolization of the Spanish *esperar*.

<sup>3</sup> The word bois (wood) is frequently used in Creole for the tree itself; and pié-bois (“foot of the wood”) for the trunk or stump. “Yon gouds pié-bois plis facile déraciné qu’mauvais l’habitude” (A big stump is easier to uproot than a bad habit), is a Martinique Creole dictum, evidently borrowed from the language of the white masters. I am sorry that I do not know which of the various trees to which the name bois d’Inde has been given by the Creoles, is referred to in the proverb—whether the mango, or China-berry. No tree is generally recognized by that name in Louisiana.

<sup>4</sup> The Avocado was the name given by the Spanish conquistadores to the *Persea gratissima*, whose fruit is the “alligator pear.” But M. Turiault again traces the Spanish word back to the Carib word Aouacate.

6. Azourdi casse en fin; dimain tape langouti. (Aujourd'hui bien mis; demain en langouti.)  
“ Well dressed to-day; only a langouti tomorrow.”—[Mauritius.]
7. Azourdi soûle bon temps, dimain pagayé. (Aujourd'hui soûl de plaisir, demain la pagaye.)  
“ To-day drunk with fun, to-morrow the paddle.” Allusion to slavery discipline.—[Mauritius.]
8. Azourdi tout marmites dibout làhaut difé. (Aujourd'hui toutes les marmites sont debout sur le feu.)  
“ All the cooking-pots are on the fire now.” One man is now as good as another:—this proverb evidently refers to the abolition of slavery.—[Mauritius].
9. Azourdi tout femmes alle confesse, més lhére zautes tourne l'église diabe zette encore pécé av zautes. (Aujourd'hui toutes les femmes vont à confesse; mais quand elles reviennent de l'église le diable leur jette encore des péchés.)  
“ All the women go to confession now-a-days; but they no sooner return from church, than the devil piles more sins upon them.”—[Mauritius.]
10. Babe canmarade ou pris difé, rousé ta ou. (Quand la barbe de ton camarade brûle, arrose la tienne.)  
“ If you see your neighbor's beard on fire, water your own.”—[Martinique.]
11. Babiez mouche, babiez viande. (Grondez les mouches, grondez la viande.)  
“ Scold the flies, scold the meat.”—[Hayti.]
12. Badnèn bien épis macaque; main pouèngâde manyèn lakhé li. (Badinez bien avec le macaque; mais prenez garde de ne pas manier sa queue.)  
“ Joke with the monkey as much as you please; but take good care not to handle his tail.”—[Trinidad.]
13. Baggie qui fair zlex fair nez. (Les choses qui font [mal aux] yeux, font [mal au] nez.)  
“ What troubles the eyes affects the nose.”—[Trinidad.]
14. Bagasse boucoup, flangourin piti morceau. (Beaucoup de bagasse, peu du jus.)  
“ Much bagasse and little juice.” (The bagasse is the refuse of the cane, after the sap has been extracted.)—[Mauritius.]
15. Baignèn iches moun; main pas lavez défer zorefes yeaux. (Baignez les enfants des autres [lit: du monde]; mais ne les lavez pas derrière les oreilles.)  
“ Bathe other people's children; but don't wash behind their ears.”—That is to say: Do not be servile in obsequiousness to others.—[Trinidad].
16. Balié nef, balié prope. (Un balai neuf, un balai propre.)  
“ A new broom's a clean broom.”—This is a Creolization of our household phrase: “ A new broom sweeps clean.”—[Mauritius.]

<sup>1</sup> The langouti was the garment worn about the loins by male slaves in Mauritius—who were wont to labor otherwise naked. In Creole both *caser* and *taper* signify “to put on,” with the difference that *caser* generally refers to good clothes. In colloquial French *tapé* means “stylishly dressed,” “well-rigged-out,” etc.

<sup>2</sup> “Take example by the misfortune of others.” I much doubt the Creole origin of any proverb relating to the beard. This one, like many others in the collection, has probably been borrowed from a European source; but it furnishes a fine sample of patois. In Louisiana Creole we would say *to quenne* instead of *ta ou*. The Spanish origin of the Creole *quenne* is obvious.

<sup>3</sup> I believe there is an omission in Thomas' version, and that the Creole ought to read: *Baggage qui fair mal zlex fair mal nez.* *Baggage* has a hundred meanings: “thing,” “affair,” “business,” “nonsense,” “stuff,” etc.

17. Bardeaux<sup>1</sup> couvert tout. (Les bardeaux couvrent tout.)  
 "Shingles cover everything."—Family roofs often cover a multitude of sins.  
 [Mauritius.]
18. Bâton pas fô passé sabe. (Le bâton n'est pas plus fort que le sabre.)  
 "The stick is not stronger than the sabre."—[Martinique].
19. Batté rendé zamés fére mal. (Les coups rendus ne font jamais de mal.)  
 "Blows returned never hurt."—Vengeance is sweet.—[Mauritius.]
20. Bef pas bousoin lakhè li you sel fois pou chassé mouche. (Le bœuf n'a pas besoin de sa queue une fois seulement pour chasser les mouches.)  
 "It isn't one time only that the ox needs his tail to drive the flies away."—Ironical expression for "you will have need of me again."—[Martinique.]
21. Bef pas jamain ka die savane, "Mégi!" (Le bœuf ne dit jamais à la savane, "Merci!")  
 "Ox never says 'Thank you,' to the pasture."—[Trinidad.]
22. Béfs laquée en lère, mauvés temps napas loin. (Les bœufs ont la queue en l'air, le mauvais temps n'est pas loin.)  
 "When the oxen lift their tails in the air, look out for bad weather."—[Mauritius.]
23. \* Bel tignon<sup>2</sup> pas fait bel négresse. (Le beau tignon ne fait pas la belle negresse.)  
 "It isn't the fine head-dress that makes the fine negress."—[Louisiana.]
24. Bénéfice ratt, c'est pou sépent. (Le bénéfice du rat, c'est pour le serpent.)  
 "The rat's gains are for the serpent."—[Martinique.]
25. Bon bagout cappe lavie. (Bon bagou sauve la vie.)  
 "Good gab saves one's life."—[Mauritius.]
26. Bon blanc mourì; mauvais rêté. (Le bon blanc meurt; le mauvais [méchant] reste.)  
 "The good white man dies; the bad remains."—[Haiti.]
27. Bon-bouche ka gagnin chouval à crédit. (La bonne bouche obtient des chevaux à crédit.)  
 "Fair words buy horses on credit."—[Trinidad.]

<sup>1</sup> The sarcasm of this proverb appears to be especially levelled at the rich. In other Mauritian proverbs the house of the rich man is always spoken of as the house covered with shingles, in contradistinction to the humble slave cabin, thatched with straw.

<sup>2</sup> Passé—lit.: "past"—therefore synonymous with "beyond." Word for word the translation would be:—"The stick is not strong beyond the sword." But the Creole generally uses "plus...passé" instead of the French plus...que ("more than"). "Victorine li plus zolie passé Alphonse"—Victorine is more pretty than Alphonse. The Creole passé is really adverbial: bearing some semblance to the old English use of the word "passing," as in "passing strange," "passing fair."

<sup>3</sup> This proverb may be found in all the Creole dialects of the West Indies. We have in the South a proverb to the same effect in English: *Flytime will come again, and the ox will want his tail.*

<sup>4</sup> A proverb current in Martinique, Louisiana, etc., with slight variations. Favors or services done through selfish policy, or compelled by necessity, do not merit acknowledgment.

<sup>5</sup> The Louisiana *tignon* or *tig' on* [*tignon* is the true Creole word] is the famously picturesque handkerchief which in old days all slave women twisted about their heads. It is yet worn by the older colored folk; and there are several styles of arranging it—*tignon chinoise*, *tignon Crète*, etc. An old New Orleans ditty is still sung, of which the refrain is:—

Madame Caba !

T'yon vous tombé !

Madame Caba,

T'yon vous tombé !

"Madame Caba, your *tignon*'s falling off!"

<sup>6</sup> That is to say: *la bonne langue*;—"the good tongue gets horses on credit."

28. \* Bon chien pas janmain trappé bon zo. (Jamais un bon chien n'obtient un bon os.)  
     “ A good dog never gets a good bone.”—Creole adaptation of an old French proverb.—  
     [*Martinique*.]
29. Bon coq chanté dans toutt pouleillé. (Un bon coq chante dans tout [n'importe quel] poulailler.)  
     “ A good cock crows in any henhouse.”—Meaning that force of character shows itself under all circumstances.—[*Martinique*.]
30. Bondié baillé nouësett pou ça qui pas ni dent. (Le Bon Dieu donne des noisettes à celui qui n'a pas de dents.)  
     “ God gives nuts to people who have no teeth.” Originally an Oriental proverb; adopted into Creole from the French. As we say: “ A fool for luck.”—[*Martinique*].
31. Bon-Guè ka baillé ti zoudéseau dans bois mangé, jigé si li pas ké baillé chrétien mangé. (Le Bon Dieu donne à manger aux petits oiseaux qui sont dans les bois; jugez s'il ne donnera pas à manger à un chrétien.)  
     “ God gives the little birds in the wood something to eat; judge for yourself, then, whether he will not give a Christian something to eat.”—[*Martinique*.]
32. Bon lilit, bon ménaze. (Bon lit, bon ménage.)  
     “ Where there's a good bed, there's good housekeeping.”—[*Mauritius*.]
33. Bon pié sauvé mauvais cô. (Un bon pied sauve un mauvais corps.)  
     “ A good (swift) foot saves a bad (weakly) body.”—Like our proverbial refrain: “ He that fights and runs away,” etc.—[*Martinique*.]
34. \* Bon-temps fait crapaud manqué bounda. (Le bon temps fait manquer de derrière au crapaud.)  
     “ Idleness leaves the frogs without buttocks.”—[*Louisiana*].
35. \* Bon-temps pas bosco. (Le bon temps n'est pas bossu.)  
     “ Good fortune is never hunch-backed.” (Same proverb in Martinique dialect, and in that of Louisiana.)—[*Trinidad*.]
36. Bon valett ni lakhé coupé. (Le bon valet a la queue coupée.)  
     “ The good servant's tail is cut off.”—Reference to the condition of a dog whose tail is cut off: he can't wag his tail, because he has no tail to wag!—[*Martinique*.]
37. \* Bouche li pas ni dimanche. (Sa bouche n'a pas de dimanche.)  
     “ His mouth never keeps Sunday”—lit: “ has no Sunday”—no day of rest.—[*Mart.*]

<sup>1</sup> Such a conversation as the following may not unfrequently be heard among the old colored folk in New Orleans:—

—“ Eh! Marie! to papé travai jordi?

—“ Moin?—non!”

—“ Eh, ben! comment to fé pou vive, alors?

—“ Ah!... ti zozo li ka bot, li ka mangé, li pas travai toujou!”

[“ Hey, Marie!—Ain't you going to work to-day?” “ I?—no!” “ Well then, how do you manage to live?” “ Ah!...little bird drinks, little bird eats, little bird doesn't work all the same!”]

<sup>2</sup> Or like the Old Country saying “ Better a good run than a bad stand.”

<sup>3</sup> In Creole *bon temps* most generally signifies “ idleness,” and is not always used in a pleasant sense. Prov. 35 is susceptible of several different applications.

<sup>4</sup> The good servant does not fawn, does not flatter, does not affect to be pleased with everything his master does—he may emulate the dog in constant faithfulness, not in fawning.

38. Boucoup disio dans cannes, més domaze marmites napas nous. (Beaucoup de sucre dans les cannes, mais par malheur nous ne sommes pas les marmites.)  
 "Plenty of sugar in the canes; but unfortunately we are not the boilers."—Said when dishonesty is discovered in the management of affairs.—[Mauritius.]
39. Boudin pas tini zorefes. (Le ventre n'a pas d'oreilles.)  
 "The belly has no ears."—[Trinidad.]
40. \*Bouki fait gombo, lapin mangé li. (Le bouc fait le gombo, le lapin le mange.)  
 "He-goat makes the gombo; but Rabbit eats it."<sup>1</sup>—[Louisiana.]
41. Ça ou jété jòdi épis piè, ou ramassé li dimain épis lanmain. (Ce que vous rejetez aujourd'hui avec le pied, vous le ramasserez demain avec la main.)  
 "What you push away from you to-day with your foot, you will pick up to-morrow with your hand."<sup>2</sup>—[Martinique.]
42. Ça ou pédi nen fè ou va trouvé nen sann. (Ce que vous perdez dans le feu, vous le retrouverez dans la cendre.)  
 "What you lose in the fire, you will find in the ashes."—Meaning that a good deed is never lost. "Cast your bread upon the waters," etc.—[Martinique.]
43. \*Ça qui bon pou zoile, bon pou canard. (Ce qui est bon pour l'oie, est bon pour le canard.).  
 "What is good for the goose is good for the duck."—Martinique.
44. Ça qui boudé manze boudin. (Celui qui boude mange du boudin.)  
 "He who sulks eats his own belly." That is to say, spites himself. The pun is untranslatable."<sup>3</sup>—[Mauritius.]
45. Ça qui dourmi napas pensé manzé. (Qui dort ne pense pas à manger.)  
 "When one sleeps, one doesn't think about eating."<sup>4</sup>—[Mauritius.]
46. Ça qui fine goûté larac zamés perdi son goût. (Celui qui a goûté l'arac n'en oublie jamais le goût.)  
 "He who has once tasted arrack never forgets the taste."—[Mauritius.]
47. Ça qui gagné piti mil dehors, veillé laplie. (Celui qui a un peu de mil dehors veille la pluie.)  
 "He who has [would raise] a little millet out of doors, watches for rain."—[Haiti.]
48. Ça qui gagne zoli fille gagne coudeçapeau. (Celui qui a une jolie fille reçoit des coups de chapeau.)  
 "He who has a pretty daughter receives plenty of salutes."—[Mauritius.]
49. Ça qui mangé zé pas save si bonda poule fait li mal. (Ceux qui mangent ne savent pas si le derrière de la poule lui fait mal.)  
 "Those who eat eggs don't know whether the chicken suffered."<sup>5</sup>—[Martinique.]
50. Ça qui ni bon piè prend douvant. (Celui qui a bon pied prend le devant.)  
 "He who is swift of foot takes the lead." Force of character always brings its possessor to the front.—[Mart.]

<sup>1</sup> This proverb is founded upon one of the many amusing Creole animal-fables, all bearing the title: *Compte Bouki épis Compte Lapin* ("Daddy Goat and Daddy Rabbit"). The rabbit always comes out victorious, as in the stories of Uncle Remus.

<sup>2</sup> "Waste not, want not."

<sup>3</sup> *Boudin* in French signifies a pudding, in Creole it also signifies the belly. Thus there is a double pun in the patois.

<sup>4</sup> "Qui dort, dîne," is an old French proverb.

<sup>5</sup> A little too vulgar for literal translation. Those who profit by the misfortunes of others, never concern themselves about the suffering which they take advantage of.

51. Ça qui pas bon pou sac pas bon pour maconte. (Ce qui n'est pas bon pour le sac, n'est pas pour le maconte.  
     “What is not fit for the bag, is not fit for the maconte.”<sup>1</sup>—[Haiti.]
52. Ça qui prend zassocié prend maître. (Celui qui prend un associé prend (se donne) un maître.  
     “He who takes a partner takes a master.”—[Martinique.]
53. Ça qui ti bien fére, zamés ti mal fére. (Ce qui est bien fait, n'est jamais mal fait.  
     “What's rightly done is never wrongly done.”—That is to say: Never regret anything done for a good motive.—[Mauritius.]
54. Ça qui tine poêlon qui cone so prix lagresse. (C'est celui qui tient le poêlon qui connaît le prix de la grasse.)  
     “It's the one who holds the skillet that knows the cost of lard.”—[Mauritius.]
55. Ça qui touyé son lecorps travaille pour levères. (Celui qui tue son propre corps, travaille pour les vers.)  
     “He who kills his own body, works for the worms.” Applicable to those who injure their health by excesses.—[Mauritius.]
56. Ça qui vîlé couvé, couvé su zé yo. (Ceux qui veulent couver, qu'elles couvent leurs propres œufs.)  
     “Let those who want to hatch hatch their own eggs.”—That is, let everybody mind his or her own business.—[Martinique.]
57. \*Ça va rivé dans semaine quatte zheudis. (Cela va arriver dans la semaine de quatre jeudis.)  
     “That will happen in the week of four Thursdays.”<sup>2</sup>—[Louisiana.]
58. Ça ziè pas vouè khè pas fè mal. (Ce que les yeux ne voient pas, ne fait pas de mal au cœur.)  
     “What the eyes don't see never hurts the heart.”<sup>3</sup>—[Martinique.]
59. Cabritt<sup>4</sup> boué, mouton sou. (Quand la chèvre boit, c'est le mouton qui est soûl.)  
     “When the goat drinks, they say the sheep is drunk.”—Meaning that the innocent are made to suffer for the guilty.—[Martinique.]
60. Cabritt li ka monté roche, li descendé. (Chèvre qui a monté un rocher doit en descendre.)  
     “The goat that climbs up the rocks must climb down again.”—[Guyana.]
61. Cabritt pas connaît goumé,<sup>5</sup> mais cui li batte la charge. (La chèvre ne sait pas le battre; mais son cuir [sa peau] bat la charge.)  
     “The goat does not know how to fight; but his hide beats the charge.”—[Haiti.]

<sup>1</sup> *Waïá* in Trinidad Creole. *Maconte* is probably from the Spanish *maconá*, a basket without handles. The Haitian *maconte* is a sort of basket made of woven grass, and used for carrying all kinds of articles. It is strapped to the shoulders.

<sup>2</sup> Ironically said to those who make promises which there is no reason to believe will ever be fulfilled.

<sup>3</sup> *Ce que yeux ne voit, cœur ne deut*, is a French proverb of the 13th century, from which was probably derived our own saying: “What the eye doesn't see, the heart doesn't grieve after.”

<sup>4</sup> *Cabri* in French signifies a kid; in Creole it signifies either a kid or a goat—more generally the latter. The word was originally spelled with a final *t*; and the Creoles of the Antilles have generally preserved the letter, even in pronunciation. I have purposely retained the various spellings given by various authors.

<sup>5</sup> *Goumé*, or in some dialects, *goumein*, is said by Turiault to be a verb of African origin—*Étude sur la langue Crète*, page 142. Still we have the French word *gourmer*, signifying to curb a horse, also, to box, to give cuffs.

62. Cabritt qui pas malin pas gras. (*La chèvre qui n'est pas maligne n'est pas grasse.*)  
     "The goat that isn't cunning never gets fat."—[Martinique.]
63. Cabrite qui pas malin mangé nen pié morne. (*La chèvre qui n'est pas maligne, mange au pied du morne.*)  
     "The foolish goat eats at the foot of the hill."—[Hayti.]
64. Canari vlé rie chôdier. (*Le canari [le pot] veut rire de la chaudière [la marmite].*)  
     "The clay-pot wishes to laugh at the iron pot."—[Trinidad.]
65. Cancrelat sourti dans lafarine. (*Le cancrelat [ravet] sort de la farine.*)  
     "The roach has come out of the flour-barrel."—Said to women of color who whiten their faces with rice-powder.—[Mauritius.]
66. Canna pa ni d'eau pou li baingne i lè trouvé pou li nagé. (*Le canard n'a pas de l'eau pour se laver, et il veut trouver assez pour nager.*)  
     "The duck hasn't enough water to wash with, and he wants enough to swim in."  
     —Refers to those who live beyond their means.—[Martinique.]
67. \* Capon vive longtemps. (*Le capon vit longtemps.*)  
     "The coward lives a long time."—[Louisiana.]
68. \* Çaquéne senti so doulére. (*Chacun sent sa douleur.*)  
     "Everybody has his own troubles."—[Mauritius.]
69. Carbon zamés va done la farine. (*Le charbon jamais ne donnera de farine.*)  
     "Coal will never make flour."—You can't wash a negro white.—[Mauritius.]
70. Catte boire dilhouile enbas latabe. (*Le chat boit l'huile sous la table.*)  
     "Cat's drinking the oil under the table."—People are making fun at your expense, though you don't know it.—[Mauritius.]
71. Catte noir apèle larzent. (*Un chat noir présage [appelle] de l'argent.*)  
     "A black cat brings money (good luck.)"—[Mauritius.]
72. Catte qui éna matou férē lembarras. (*La chatte qui a un matou fait ses embarras.*)  
     "The she-cat who has a tom-cat, puts on airs."—[Mauritius.]

<sup>1</sup> "Pot calls the kettle black." The clay pot (*canari*) has almost disappeared from Creole kitchens in Louisiana; but the term survives in a song of which the burthen is: "*Canari cassé dans difé.*"

<sup>2</sup> The word *capon* is variously applied by Creoles as a term of reproach. It may refer rather to stinginess, hypocrisy, or untruthfulness, than to cowardice. We have in New Orleans an ancient Creole ballad of which the refrain is:

Alcée Leblanc  
*Mo di tol, chère,  
 To trop capon  
 Pou payé menage!  
 C'est qui di ça,  
 Ca que di toi chère,  
 Alcée Leblanc!*

In this case the word evidently refers to the niggardliness of *Alcée*, who did not relish the idea of settling \$500 or perhaps \$1,000 of furniture upon his favorite quadroon girl. The song itself commemorates customs of slavery days. Those who took to themselves colored mistresses frequently settled much property upon them—the arrangement being usually made by the mother of the girl. Housekeeping outfits of this character, constituting a sort of dowry, ranged in value from \$600 to even \$2,500; and such dowries formed the foundation of many celebrated private lodging houses in New Orleans kept by colored women. The quadroon housekeepers have now almost all disappeared.

<sup>3</sup> This is certainly of English origin.

73. Catte qui fine Bourle av difé pére lacende. (Le chat qui s'est brûlé avec le feu, a peur de la cendre.)  
 "When a cat has been once burned by fire, it is even afraid of cinders."—[Mauritius.]
74. Causer cé manger zorefes. (Causer, c'est le manger des oreilles.)  
 "Conversation is the food of the ears."—[Trinidad.]
75. C'est bon khé crâbe qui lacause li pas tini tête. (C'est à cause de son bon cœur que le crabe n'a pas de tête.)  
 "It is because of his good heart that the crab has no head."—[Martinique.]
76. \*C'est couteau qui connaite ça qui dans cœur geomon. (C'est le couteau qui sait ce qu'il y a dans le cœur du gromon.)  
 "It's the knife that knows what's in the heart of the pumpkin."—[Martinique.]
77. C'est cuiller qui allé lacaille gamelle ; gamelle pas jamain allé lacail cuiller. (C'est la cuillère qui va à la maison de la gamelle ; jamais la gamelle ne va à la maison de la cuiller.)  
 "Spoon goes to bowl's house ; bowl never goes to spoon's house."—[Hayti.]
78. C'est douvant tambou nion connaît Zamba. (C'est devant le tambour qu'on reconnaît Zamba.)  
 "It's before the drum one learns to know Zamba."—[Hayti.]
79. C'est langue crapaud<sup>1</sup> qui ka trahi crapaud. (C'est la langue du crapaud qui le trahit.)  
 "It's the frog's own tongue that betrays him."—[Trinidad.]
80. C'est lhé vent ka venté, moun ka ouer lapeau poule. (C'est quand le vent vente qu'on peut voir la peau de la poule—lit.: que le monde peut voir.)  
 "It's when the wind is blowing that folks can see the skin of a fowl."—True character is revealed under adverse circumstances.—[Trinidad.]
81. C'est nans temps laplif bêf biscoèn lakhé li. (C'est dans le temps de pluie que le bœuf a besoin de sa queue.)  
 "It's in the rainy season that the ox needs his tail."—(See Martinique proverb No. 20.)  
 [Trinidad.]
82. C'est pas tout les-jou guiaibe n'empôte you pauve nhomme. (Ce n'est pas tous les jours que le diable emporte un homme pauvre.)  
 "It isn't every day that the devil carries off a poor man."—[Martinique.]
83. Cé souliers tout-sél qui save si bas tini tous. (Ce sont les souliers seuls qui savent si les bas ont des trous.)  
 "It's only the shoes that know if the stockings have holes."—[Trinidad.]

<sup>1</sup> Implies that excessive good nature is usually indicative of feeble reasoning-pow'r.

<sup>2</sup> This proverb exists in five Creole dialects. In the Guyana patois it is slightly different: *Couteau ouïso connaît quitor intam* (le couteau seul connaît le cœur de l'igname.) "It's only the knife that knows what's in the heart of the yam."

<sup>3</sup> *Cale* or *Caille*, as sometimes written, is a Creole word of Carib origin. In the cities of the Antilles *casa* is generally substituted—probably derived from the Spanish *casa*, "house."

<sup>4</sup> In some of the West Indies the French word *crapaud* seems to have been adopted by the Creoles to signify either a toad or a frog, as it is much more easily pronounced by Creole lips than *grenouille*, which they make sound like "gwoonoufile." But in Louisiana there is a word used for frog, a delightful and absolutely perfect onomatopœia: *OUAOUABON* (wah-wahron).

I think the prettiest collection of Creole onomatopœia made by any folklorist is that in Baisac's *Étude sur le Patois Crœole Mauricien*, pp. 92-95. The delightful little Creole nursery-narrative, in which the cries of all kinds of domestic animals are imitated by patois phrases, deserves special attention.

84. Chaque bêtè-à-fè clairé pou nânme yo. (Chaque mouche-à-feu éclaire pour son âme.  
"Every fire-fly makes light for its own soul;" that is to say, "Every one for himself."—[Martinique.]
85. Chatt pas là, ratt ka bailli bal. (Absent le chat, les rats donnent un bal.)  
"When the cat's away the rats give a ball."—[Martinique.]
86. \* Chatte brillé pair di feu. (Le chat brûlé a peur du feu.)  
"A burnt cat dreads the fire."—[Louisiana.]
87. Chien connaît comment li fait pou manger zos. (Le chien sait comment il fait pour manger les os.)  
"The dog knows how he manages to eat bones."—[Hayti.]
88. Chien jamain mordé petite li jusque nen zos. (La chienne ne mord jamais ses petits jusqu'à l'os.)  
"The bitch never bites her pups to the bone."—[Hayti.]
89. \* Chien jappé li pas mordé. (Le chien qui jappe ne mord pas.)  
"The dog that yelps doesn't bite."—[Louisiana.]
90. Chien pas mangé chien. (Les chiens ne mangent pas les chiens.)  
"Dogs do not eat dogs."—[Louisiana.]
91. Chien qui fé caca dans chimin li blié, mais ça qui tiré pas blié. (Le chien qui fait caca sur le chemin, oublie; mais celui qui l'en ôte, n'oublie pas.)  
"The dog that dunged in the road forgets all about it, but the person who has to remove it does not forget."—[Martinique.]
92. Chien tini guiole fôte à cafe maitè li. (Le chien a la gueule forte dans la maison de son maître.)  
"The dog is loud-mouthed in the house of his master."—[Martinique.]
93. Chien tini quate patte, mais li pas capabe prend quate chimin. (Le chien a quatre pattes mais il ne peut pas [n'est pas capable de] prendre quatre chemins.)  
"The dog has four paws but is not able to go four different ways [at one time]."—[Martinique.]
94. Chouval rôté nen zécurie, milettenen savane. (Le cheval reste dans l'écurie, le mulet dans la savane.)  
"The horse remains in the stable, the mule in the field."—[Martinique.]
95. \* Cila qui rit vendredi va pleuré dimanche. (Celui qui rit le vendredi va pleurer le dimanche.)  
"He who laughs on Friday will cry on Sunday." There is an English proverb, "Sing at your breakfast and you'll cry at your dinner."—[Louisiana.]
96. Ciramon<sup>1</sup> pas donne calabasse. (Le giraumon ne donne pas la calebasse.)  
"The pumpkin doesn't yield the calabash."—[Hayti.]

<sup>1</sup> *Bailler* (to give) affords example of a quaint French verb preserved in the Creole dialect, *-bailler*. It can be found in MOLIÈRE. Formerly a Frenchman would have said, "*Bailler sa roi, bailler sa parole*. It is now little used in France, except in such colloquialisms as, "*Vous me la bailliez belle!*"

<sup>2</sup> Each one must be content with his own station. Here the mule seems to represent the slave; the horse, the master or overseer.

<sup>2</sup> I give the spelling *Ciramon* as I find it in Mr. Bigelow's contributions to *Harper's Magazine*, 1875. (See BIBLIOGRAPHY.) Nevertheless I suspect the spelling is wrong. In Louisiana Creole we say *Gironon*. The French word is *Giraumon*.

97. \*Cochon conné sir qui bois l'apé frotté. (Le cochon sait bien sur quel arbre [bois] il va se frotter.)  
“The hog knows well what sort of tree to rub himself against.”<sup>1</sup>—[Louisiana.]
98. Coment to tale to natte faut to dourmi. (Comment tu étends ta natte il faut que tu te couches.)  
“As you spread your mat, so must you lie.”—[Mauritius.]
99. \*Compé Torti va doucement; mais li rivé coté bite pendant Compé Chivreil apé dormi. (Compère Tortue va doucement; mais il arrive au bâti pendant que Compère Chevreuil dort.  
“Daddy Tortoise goes slow; but he gets to the goal while Daddy Deer is asleep.”<sup>2</sup>  
—[Louisiana.]
100. Complot plis fort passé ouanga.<sup>3</sup> (Le complot est plus fort que l'ouanga.)  
<sup>2</sup> “Conspiracy is stronger than witchcraft.”—[Hayti.]
101. Conseillère napas payré. (Le donneur de conseil n'est pas le payeur.)  
“The adviser is not the payer.” That is to say, the one who gives advice has nothing to lose.—[Mauritius.]
102. Coq canté divant la porte, doumounde vini. (Quand le coq chante devant la porte quelqu'un vient.)  
“When the cock crows before the door, somebody is coming.”<sup>4</sup>—[Mauritius.]

<sup>1</sup> In most of the Creole dialects several different versions of a popular proverb are current. A friend gives me this one of proverb 97: *Cochon-marron conné en haut qui bois li frotté.* (“The wild hog knows what tree to rub himself upon.”) *Marron* is applied in all forms of the Creole patois to wild things; *zhèbes marrons* signifies “wild plants.” The term, *couri-marron*, or *nègue-marron* formerly designated a runaway slave in Louisiana as it did in the Antilles. There is an old New Orleans saying:

“Après yé tiré canon  
Nègue sans passe c'est nègue-marron.”

This referred to the old custom in New Orleans of firing a cannon at eight P. M. in winter, and nine P. M. in summer, as a warning to all slaves to retire. It was a species of modern curfew-signal. Any slave found abroad after those hours, without a pass, was liable to arrest and a whipping of twenty-five lashes. *Marron*, from which the English word “Maroon” is derived, has a Spanish origin. “It is,” says Skeats, “a clift form of the Spanish *cimarrón*, wild, unruly; literally, ‘living in the mountain-tops.’ *Cimarrón*, from Span. *Cima*, a mountain-summit. The original term for “Maroon” was *negro-cimarrón*, as it still is in some parts of Cuba.

<sup>2</sup> Based upon the Creole fable of *Compère Tortue* and *Compère Chevreuil*, rather different from the primitive story of the Hare and the Tortoise.

“Di moï si to gagnin nhomme!  
Mo va fê ouanga pou li;  
Mo fê li tourné fantôme  
Si to vîle mo to mari....

“Tell me if thou hast a man [a lover]: I will make a *ouanga* for him—I will change him into a ghost if thou wilt have me for thy husband.”.... This word, of African origin, is applied to all things connected with the voodooism of the negroes. In the song, *Dipi mo vous, toué Adèle*, from which the above lines are taken, the wooper threatens to get rid of a rival by *ouanga*—to “turn him into a ghost.” The victims of voodooism are said to have gradually withered away, probably through the influence of secret poison. The word *grigri*, also of African origin, simply refers to a charm, which may be used for an innocent or innocuous purpose. Thus, in a Louisiana Creole song, we find a quadroon mother promising her daughter a charm to prevent the white lover from forsaking her: *Pou tchombé li na fê grigri*—“We shall make a *grigri* to keep him.”

<sup>3</sup> This is also a proverb of European origin. The character of Creole folklore is very different from European folklore in the matter of superstition.

103. Cououi pas laide, tempe lafôce pas là. (Ce n'est pas laid de courir, quand on n'a pas de force.)  
 "It isn't ugly to run, when one isn't strong enough to stay."—[Trin.]
104. Coup de langue pis mauvais piqûre de serpent. (Un coup de langue est plus mauvais qu'une piqûre de serpent.  
 "A tongue-thrust is worse than a serpent's sting."—[Martinique.]
105. Coudepled napas empêche coudecorne. (Les coups de pied n'empêchent pas les coups de cornue.  
 "Kicking doesn't hinder butting." There is more than one way to revenge oneself.—[Mauritius.]
106. Coupé son nenez, valor so figuire. (Couper son nez, c'est voler sa figure.)  
 "Cutting off one's nose is robbing one's face."—[Mauritius.]
107. \* Coupé zoré milet fait pas choual. (Couper les oreilles au mulet, n'en fait pas un cheval.  
 "Cutting off a mule's ears won't make him a horse."—[Louisiana.]
108. Couroupas dansé, zaco rié. (Le couroupas [colimaçon] danse le singe rit.)  
 "Monkey laughs when the snail dances."—[Mauritius.]
109. Couaval napas marche av bourique. (Le cheval ne marche pas avec l'âne.  
 "The horse doesn't walk with the ass."—Let each keep his proper place.—[Mauritius.]
110. Couyenade c'est pas limonade. (Couillionade n'est pas limonade.)  
 "Nonsense is not sugar-water" (lemonade), says Thomas. The vulgarity of the French word partly loses its grossness in the Creole.—[Trinidad.]
111. Crabe pas mâché, li pas gras;—li mâché touop, et li tombé nans chôdiér. (Le crabe ne marche pas, il n'est pas gras; il marche trop, et il tombe dans la chaudière).  
 "The crab doesn't walk, he isn't fat; he walks too much, and falls into the pot."—[Trinidad.]
112. \* Craché nen laire, li va tombé enhaut vou nez. (Crachez dans l'air, il vous en tombera sur le nez).  
 "If you spit in the air, it will fall back on your own nose."—[Louisiana.]
113. Crapaud pas tini chîmise, ous vîlé ji pôte caneçon. (Le crapaud n'a pas de chemise, et vous voulez qu'il porte caleçon).  
 "The frog has no shirt, and you want him to wear drawers!"—[Trinidad.]
114. Cresson content boire dileau. (Le cresson aime à boire l'eau).  
 "The water cress loves to drink water." Used interrogatively, this is equivalent to the old saw: "Does a duck like water?" "Will a duck swim?"—[Mauritius.]
115. Croquez maconte ou oueti<sup>4</sup> main ou ka rivé. (Accrochez votre maconte où vous pouvez l'atteindre avec la main [lit. où votre main peut arriver]).  
 "Hang up your maconte where you can reach it with your hand."—[Hayt.]

<sup>1</sup> This seems to me much wittier than our old proverb: "You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear."

<sup>2</sup> Probably had its origin in a Creole *contes*. Same applications as Proverbs 226, 263, 315.

<sup>3</sup> Like our proverb about chickens coming home to roost. If you talk scandal at random, the mischief done will sooner or later recoil upon yourself. I find the same proverb in the Mauritian dialect.

<sup>4</sup> The Martinique dialect gives both *oti* and *outi* for "où": "where." Mr. Bigelow gives the curious spelling *croquez*. The word is certainly derived from the French, *accrocher*. In Louisiana Creole we always say 'croché' for "hang up." I doubt the correctness of the Haytian spelling as here given: for the French word *croquer* ("to devour," "gobble up," "pilfer," etc.) has its Creole counterpart; and the soft *ch* is never, so far as I can learn, changed into the *k* or *g* sound in the patois.

116. D'abord vous guetté poux de bois mangé bouteille, croquez calabasse vous haut. (Quand vous voyez les poux-de-bois manger les bouteilles, accrochez vos calabasses [en] haut).  
 "When you see the woodlice eating the bottles, hang your calabashes out of their reach." <sup>1</sup>—[*Hayti*.]
117. D'abord vous guetté poux de bois mangé can'ri, calebasse pas capabe prend pied. (Quand que vous voyez les poux-de-bois manger les marmites, les calebasses ne peuvent pas leur resister).  
 "When you see the wood-lice eating the pots, the calabashes can't be expected to resist."<sup>2</sup>—[*Hayti*.]
118. Dans mariaze liciens, témoins gagne batté. (Aux noces des chiens, les témoins ont les coups.)  
 "At a dog's wedding it's the witnesses who get hurt."—[*Mauritius*.]
119. Délier chein, cé "chein"; douvant chein, cé "Missier Chein." (Derrière le chien, c'est "chien," mais devant le chien, c'est "Monsieur le Chien.")  
 "Behind the dog's back it is 'dog'; but before the dog it is 'Mr. Dog.'"—[*Trinidad*.]
120. Dent mordé langue. (Les dents mordent la langue.)  
 "The teeth bite the tongue."—[*Hayti*.]
121. Dents pas ka pôté dëi. (Les dents ne portent pas le deuil.)  
 "Teeth do not wear mourning."—meaning that, even when unhappy, people may show their teeth in laughter or smiles.—[*Trinidad*.]
122. Dent pas khé ("Dents pas cœur"—Les dents ne sont pas le cœur).  
 "The teeth are not the heart." A curious proverb, referring to the exposure of the teeth by laughter."<sup>3</sup>—[*Martinique*.]
123. \* Di moin qui vous laimein, ma di vous qui vous yé. (Dites moi qui vous aimez, et je vous dirai qui vous êtes.)  
 "Tell me whom you love, and I'll tell you who you are."—[*Louisiana*.]
124. Dileau dourmi touyé dimounde. (L'eau qui dort tue les gens.)  
 "The water that sleeps kills people."—[*Mauritius*.]
125. Dimounde qui fère larzent, napas larzent qui fère dimounde. (Ce sont les hommes qui font l'argent, ce n'est pas l'argent qui fait les hommes.)  
 "It's the men who make the money; 'tisn't the money that makes the men."—[*Mauritius*.]
126. Divant camarades capabe largué quilotte. (Devant des camarades on peut lâcher sa culotte.)  
 "Before friends one can even take off one's breeches."—[*Mauritius*.]

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Bigelow is certainly wrong in his definition of the origin of the word which he spells *guêlé*. It is a Creole adoption of the French *guetter*, "to watch;" and is used by the Creoles in the sense of "observe," "perceive," "see." Other authorities spell it *guête*, as all verbs ending in "ter" in French make their Creole termination in "té." This verb is one of many to which slightly different meanings from those belonging to the original French words, are attached by the Creoles. Thus *cappe*, from *échapper*, is used as an equivalent for *sauver*.

<sup>2</sup> The saliva of the tropical woodlouse is said to be powerful enough to affect iron.

<sup>3</sup> The laugh or smile that shows the teeth does not always prove that the heart is merry.

<sup>4</sup> "Still waters run deep." The proverb is susceptible of various applications. Every one who has sojourned in tropical, or even semi-tropical latitudes knows the deadly nature of stagnant water in the feverish summer season.

127. Divant tranzés faut boutonné canneçon. (Devant des étrangers il faut boutonner son caleçon.)  
 "Before strangers one must keep one's drawers buttoned."—[Mauritius.]
128. Dizéfs canard pil gros qui dizéfs poule. (Les œufs de cane sont plus gros que les œufs de poule.)  
 "Ducks' eggs are bigger than hens' eggs."—Quantity is no guarantee of quality.—[Mauritius.]
129. Dizéfs coq, poule qui fére. (Les œufs de coq, c'est la poule qui les fait.)  
 "It's the hen that makes the cock's eggs."—[Mauritius.]
130. \* Dolo toujou courri larivière. (L'eau va toujours à la rivière.)  
 "Water always runs to the river."—[Louisiana.]
131. Doucement napas empêce arrivér. (Aller doucement n'empêche pas d'arriver.)  
 "Going gently about a thing won't prevent its being done."—[Mauritius.]
132. Fair pou fair pas mal. (Faire pour faire n'est pas [mauvais] difficile.)  
 "It is not hard to do a thing for the sake of doing it."—[Trinidad.]
133. Faut janmain mett racounn<sup>2</sup> dans loge poule. (Il ne faut jamais mettre un raton dans la loge des poules.)  
 "One must never put a 'coon into a henhouse."—[Martinique.]
134. Faut jamais porté déil avant défint dans cerkeil. (Il ne faut jamais porter le deuil avant que le défunt soit dans le cercueil.)  
 "Never wear mourning before the dead man's in his coffin."—[Louisiana.]
135. Faut psoûolee môr pou moune pè vivre. (Il faut que les paroles meurent, afin que le monde puisse vivre.)  
 "Words must die that people may live."—Ironical; this is said to those who are oversensitive regarding what is said about them."—[Trinidad.]
136. Faut pas cassé so male avant li fine mir. (Il ne faut pas casser son maïs avant qu'il soit mûr.)  
 "Musn't pluck one's corn before it's ripe."—[Mauritius.]
137. \* Faut pas marré tayau<sup>4</sup> avec saucisse. (Il ne faut pas attacher le chien-courant (tafant) avec des saucisses.)  
 "Musn't tie up the hound with a string of sausages."—[Louisiana.]
138. Fére éne tourou pour boucé laute. (Il fait un trou pour en boucher un autre.)  
 "Make one hole to stop another." "Borrow money to pay a debt."—[Mauritius.]
139. Gambette ous trouvé gan chemin, nen gan chemin ous va pède li. (Le gambette que vous trouvez sur le grand chemin, sur le grand chemin vous le perdez.)  
 "Every jack-knife found on the high-road, will be lost on the high-road."—[Hayti.]

<sup>1</sup> Literally: "Gently doesn't prevent arriving." One can reach his destination as well by walking slowly, as by making frantic haste.

<sup>2</sup> A Creole friend assures me that in Louisiana patois, the word for coon, is *chaout*. This bears so singular a resemblance in sound to a French word of very different meaning—*chat-huant* (screech-owl) that it seems possible the negroes have in this, as in other cases, given the name of one creature to another.

<sup>3</sup> Don't anticipate trouble: "Never bid the devil good morrow till you meet him."

"Don't cross a bridge until you come to it."

<sup>4</sup> Adopted from old French "*tayau*" (tally-ho!) the cry of the huntsman to his hounds.

The Creoles have thus curiously, but forcibly, named the hound itself.

<sup>5</sup>I cannot discover the etymology of this word, according to the meaning given by Mr. Bigelow. The ordinary French signification of *gambette* is "red-shank"—*Totanus calidris*.

140. Gens bon-temps kâillé die gouvénér bon-jou. (Les gens [qui ont du] bon-temps vont dire bon-jour au gouverneur.)  
 " Folks who have nothing to do (lit.: *who have a fine time*) go to bid the Governor good-day." *Gens bon-temps*: "fine-time folks."—[Trinidad.]
141. \*Gens fénants ka mandé travâï épis bouche; main khères yeaux ka pouier Bondié pou yeaux pas touver. (Les gens fainânts demandent avec leurs bouches pour du travail, mais leurs coeurs prient le Bon Dieu [pour] qu'ils n'en trouvent point.)  
 " Lazy folks ask for work with their lips: but their hearts pray God that they may not find it."—[Trinidad.]
142. Gens qui ka ba ous consei gagnen chouval gouous-boudin nans lhouvénale, nans carêm: pas ka rider ous nourri li. (Les gens qui nous donnent conseil d'acheter un cheval à gros-ventre pendant l'hivernage, ne veulent point vous aider à le nourrir pendant le carême.)  
 " Folks who advise you to buy a big-bellied horse in a rainy season (when grass is plenty), won't help you to feed him in the dry season when grass is scarce."—[Trinidad.]
143. Goufe passé difil sivré. (Où l'aiguille passe, le fil suivra.)  
 " Where the needle passes thread will follow."—[Mauritius.]
144. Graisse pas tini sentiment. (La graisse n'a pas de sentiment.)  
 " Fat has no feeling."—[Trinidad.]
145. Haillons mié passé tout nu. (Les haillons sont mieux que de rester tout nu.)  
 " Rags are better than nakedness." Half-a-loaf's better than no bread."—[Haiti.]
146. Hai moun; main pas bayeaux païèn pou châfer dleau. (Hais les gens; mais ne lour donne pas des paniers pour charrier de l'eau.)  
 " Hate people; but don't give them baskets to carry water in."—that is to say: Don't tell lies about them that no one can believe—stories that "won't hold water."—[Trinidad.]
147. \*Jadin loin, gombo gâté. (Jardin loin, gombo gâté.)  
 " When the garden is far, the gombo is spoiled."—[Martinique.]
148. \*Jamais di: Fontaine, mo va jamais boi to dolo. (Ne dis jamais—Fontaine, je ne boirai jamais de ton eau.)  
 " Never say—'Spring, I will never drink your water.'"—[Louisiana.]
149. Janmain guiaibe ka dòmi. (Jamais le diable ne s'endort.)  
 " The devil never sleeps.—[Martinique.]

<sup>1</sup>This is J. J. Thomas' translation, as given in his "Theory and Practice of Creole Grammar." *Lhouvénale* is a word which does not exist in our Louisiana patois. Does it come from the Spanish *lluvia*—"to rain"? or is it only a Creole form of the French *hivernage*? *Carême*, of course means Lent; whether the dry season in Trinidad is concomitant with the Lenten epoch, or whether the Creoles of the Island use the word to signify any season of scarcity, I am unable to decide.

<sup>2</sup>When a strong man has opened the way, feebler folks may safely follow.

<sup>3</sup>There may be some physiological truth in this proverb as applied to the inhabitants of the Antilles, where stoutness is the exception. Generally speaking phlegmatic persons are inclined to fleshiness.

<sup>4</sup>This appears to be a universal Creole proverb. If you want anything to be well done, you must look after it yourself: to absent oneself from one's business is unwise, etc.

<sup>5</sup>The loftiest pride is liable to fall; and we know not how soon we may be glad to seek the aid of the most humble.

150. Janmain nous ne pas douè ladans quiou poule compté zè. (Il ne faut jamais [nous ne devons jamais] compter les œufs dans la derrière de la poule.)  
 "We should never count the eggs in the body of the hen."—(The Creole proverb is, however, less delicate.)—[Martinique.]
151. Jouè epis chatt ou trappé coup d'patte. (Jouez avec le chat, et vous attrapperez un coup de patte.)  
 "Play with the cat, and you'll get scratched."—[Martinique.]
152. \*Joué epis chien ou trappé pice. (Jouez avec les chiens, vous aurez des puces.)  
 "Play with the dogs, and you will get fleas."<sup>1</sup>—[Martinique.]
153. \*Joudui pou ous, demain pou moin. (Aujourd'hui pour vous, demain pour moi.)  
 "To-day for you; to-morrow for me."<sup>2</sup>—[Hayti.]
154. La otì zoudéseau ka fè niche yo, c'est la yo ka couché. (Où les oiseaux font leur nids, là ils se couchent.)  
 "Where the birds build their nests, there they sleep."—[Martinique.]
155. Laboue moque lamare. (La boue se moque de la mare.)  
 "The mud laughs at the puddle."—Like our: "Pot calls kettle black."—[Mauritius.]
156. Lacase bardeaux napas guétte la case vitivére. (La maison [couverte de] bardeaux ne regarde point la case couverte de vétiver.)  
 "The house roofed with shingles doesn't look at the hut covered with vetiver."—[Mauritius.]
157. \* Lagniappe c'est bitin qui bon. (Lagniappe c'est du bon butin.)  
 "Lagniappe is lawful booty."<sup>3</sup>—[Louisiana.]
158. Laguer vêti pas ka pouend vié nègues nans cabarets. (La guerre avertie ne prend pas de vieux nègres dans les cabarets.)  
 "Threatened war doesn't surprise old negroes in the grog-shops."<sup>4</sup>—[Trinidad.]
159. \* Laguerre vertie pas tchué beaucoup soldats. (La guerre avertie ne tue pas beaucoup de soldats.)  
 "Threatened war doesn't kill many soldiers."—[Louisiana.]
160. Lakhé bef dit : Temps allé, temps vini. (La queue du bœuf dit : Le temps s'en va, le temps revient.)  
 "The ox's tail says : Time goes, time comes."<sup>5</sup>—[Martinique.]
161. Lalangue napas lézos. (La langue n'a pas d'os).  
 "The tongue has no bones." This proverb has various applications. One of the best alludes to promises or engagements made with the secret determination not to keep them.—[Mauritius.]

<sup>1</sup> This seems to be a universal proverb. In Louisiana we say : *Joué avec 't i chien*, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Current also in Louisiana : *Jordit pou vou*, etc.: "Your turn to-day; perhaps it may be mine to-morrow."

<sup>3</sup> *Lagniappe*, a word familiar to every child in New Orleans, signifies the little present given to purchasers of groceries, provisions, fruit, or other goods sold at retail stores. Groceries, especially, seek to rival each other in the attractive qualities of their *lagniappe*; consisting of candies, fruits, biscuits, little fancy cakes, etc. The chief purpose is to attract children. The little one sent for a pound of butter, or "a dime's worth" of sugar, never fails to ask for its *lagniappe*.

<sup>4</sup> Proverbs 158-9 are equivalent to our "Forewarned is forearmed."

<sup>5</sup> See Proverb 22. Whether the swing of the tail suggested the idea of a pendulum to the deviser of this saying is doubtful. The meaning seems to me that the motion of the ox's tail indicates a change not of time, but of weather (*temps*).

162. \* Lamisère à deux, Misère et Compagnie. (La misère à deux, c'est Misère et Compagnie.)  
 "Misery for two, is Misery & Co." <sup>1</sup>—[Louisiana.]
163. Lapauveté napas éne vis, més li éne bien gros coulou. (La pauvreté n'est pas une vis [un vice] ; mais c'est un bien gros clou.)  
 "Poverty isn't a screw; but it's a very big nail." The pun will be obvious to a French reader; but *rice* is not a true Creole word, according to Baissac."—[Mauritius.]
164. Lapin dit : Boué toutt, mangé toutt, pas dit toutt. (Le lapin dit : Buvez tout, mangez tout, ne dites pas tout.)  
 "Rabbit says : Drink everything, eat everything, but don't tell everything." <sup>2</sup>—[Martinique.]
165. Laplie tombé, couroupas va sourti. (La pluie tombe, les colimaçons vent sortir.)  
 "It is raining ; snails will be out presently."—[Mauritius.]
166. \* Laplie tombé, ouaouaron chanté. (Quand la pluie va tomber, les grenouilles chantent.)  
 "When the rain is coming, the bull-frogs sing."—[Louisiana.]
167. Laquée bourrique napas laquée couval. (Une queue d'âne n'est pas une queue de cheval.)  
 "A donkey's tail is not a horse's tail." Can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.—[Mauritius.]
168. Larzan bon, més li trop cère. (L'argent est bon, mais il est trop cher.)  
 "Money's good ; but it's too dear."—[Mauritius.]
169. Larzan napas trouvé dans lipied milet. (L'argent ne se trouve pas dans le pied d'un mulet.)  
 "Money isn't to be found in a mule's hoof."—[Mauritius.]
170. Larzan napas éna famille. (L'argent n'a pas de famille.)  
 "Money has no blood relations."—There is no friendship in business.—[Mauritius.]
171. \* La-tché chatte poussé avec temps. (La queue du chat pousse avec le temps.)  
 "The cat's tail takes time to grow."—[Louisiana.]
172. Lépé dit aimé ous pendant li rouge doigthe ous. (La lépre dit qu'elle vous aime pendant qu'elle vous ronge les doigts.)  
 "The leprosy says it loves you, while it is eating your fingers."—[Hayti.]
173. L'hére coq canté, li bon pour marié. (Quand le coq chante, il est bon à marier.)  
 "When the cock begins to crow, he is old enough to get married."—[Mauritius.]
174. Lhére lamontagne boulré, tout dimounde coné; lhére léqueré boulré, qui coné ? (Quand la montagne brûle, tout le monde le sait; quand le cœur brûle qui le sait?)  
 "When the mountain burns, everybody knows it; when the heart burns, who knows it?"—[Mauritius.]
175. Li allé l'école cabritt, li ritouné mouton. (Il est allé à l'école [comme un] cabri; il est revenu mouton.)  
 "He went to school a kid, and came back a sheep."<sup>3</sup>—[Martinique.]

<sup>1</sup> Refers especially to a man who marries without having made proper provision for the future. The Creole does not believe in our reckless proverb: "What will keep one, will keep two." *Non, non, cher, lamisère à deux, Misère & Cie.!*

<sup>2</sup> Founded upon a celebrated Creole fable: see Prov. 40 (*note*).

<sup>3</sup> The allusion to the overgrown and shy schoolboy, who has lost the mischievous playfulness of his childhood, is easily recognizable. Creole planters of the Antilles generally sent their sons to Europe to be educated.

176. Li fine vendé so coçon. (Il a vendu son cochon.)  
 "He has sold his pig."<sup>1</sup>—[Mauritius.]
177. Li lacasse zozos pariaca. (Il chasse aux oiseaux à paliaca.)  
 "He's hunting paliaca-birds."<sup>2</sup>—[Mauritius.]
178. Li manque lagale pour gratté. (Il [ne] manque [que] de gale pour se gratter. [Lit. In good French: Il ne lui manque que la gale, etc.])  
 "He only wants the itch so that he may scratch himself." Said of a man who has all that his heart can wish for.<sup>3</sup>—[Mauritius.]
179. Li pour marié; més quelquefois bague mariée glisse dans lédoight. (Il doit se marier; mais quelquefois la bague de mariage glisse du doigt.)  
 "He is to be married, they say; but sometimes the marriage-ring slips from one's finger."<sup>4</sup>—[Mauritius.]
180. Li soule bontemps. (Il se soule de bon temps.)  
 "He is drunk with doing nothing."—[Mauritius.]
181. Liane yame ka marré yame. (La liane du yam lie [lit. amarre] le yam.)  
 "The yam-vine ties the yam."<sup>5</sup>—[Trinidad.]
182. Lilit pour dé napas lilet pour trois. (Un lit pour deux n'est pas un lit pour trois.)  
 "A bed for two isn't a bed for three."—[Mauritius.]
183. Lizié napas éna balizaze. (Les yeux n'ont pas de frontière.)<sup>6</sup>  
 "Eyes have no boundary." Equivalent to the English saying: "A cat may look at a king."—[Mauritius.]
184. Macaque caresser iche li touop, li fourrer doëgt nans ziez li. (Le macaque, en caressant trop son petit, lui a fourré le doigt dans l'œil.)  
 "By petting her young one too much, the monkey ends by poking her finger into its eye."—[Trinidad.]
185. \* Macaque dan calebasse. (Le macaque dans la calebasse.)  
 "Monkey in the calabash."<sup>7</sup>—[Louisiana.]
- 186 \* Macaque dit si so croupion plimé ças pas gadé lezautt. (Le macaque dit que si son croupion est plumé, ça ne regarde pas les autres.)  
 "Monkey says if his rump is bare, it's nobody's business."<sup>8</sup>—[Louisiana.]

<sup>1</sup> Said of one who unexpectedly disburses a considerable sum, or who spends more money than his visible resources admit of.

<sup>2</sup> *Paliaca* is the Mauritian term for the brightly-colored kerchief there worn by all young negroes in lieu of hats or bonnets like the old time Louisiana *tignon*. "He is hunting for paliaca-birds" therefore means, "He is running after the colored girls."

<sup>3</sup> We have a singular expression in Louisiana: "Li metté manteo dans so faillots. (He puts lard in his beans.)" That is to say, "He is well off." *Manteo* is a Creolised form of the Spanish *manteo*, used in Spanish-America to signify lard.

<sup>4</sup> "There's many a slip twixt the cup and the lip."

<sup>5</sup> In Martinique Creole the proverb is: *Côde gnâme marré gnâme*. "Côde" (*corde*) signifying the same as *liane*, the long cord-like stalk of the creeper. Folks are sometimes caught fast in the snares they set for others, just as the yam is tied with its own stalk.

<sup>6</sup> The Mauritian Creoles have adopted a marine word in lieu of the French term *frontière*. "Balizaze" is the Creole form of the French *bâtiage*, from *bâtie*, a sea mark, buoy—word adopted in our own nautical technology. The term completely changes its meaning as well as its spelling in Creole.

<sup>7</sup> Allusion to the old fable about the monkey, who after putting his hand easily into the orifice of a gourd, could not withdraw it without letting go what he sought to steal from within, and so got caught. In the figurative Creole speech one who allows his passions to ruin or disgrace him, is a *macaque dans calebasse*.

<sup>8</sup> Allusion to the callosities of the monkey. *Plimé* literally means "plucked;" but the Creole negroes use it to signify "bare" from any cause. A negro in rags might use the above proverb as a hint to those who wish to joke him about his personal appearance.

187. \* Macaque pas jamain ka die iche li laide. (Le macaque ne dit jamais que son petit est laid.)  
“Monkey never says its young is ugly.”<sup>1</sup>—[Trinidad.]
188. Macaque save qui bois li monté; li pas monté zaurangé. (Le macaque sait sur quel arbre il doit monter; il ne monte pas sur l’oranger.)  
“The monkey well knows what tree to climb; he doesn’t climb an orange tree.”<sup>2</sup>—[Martinique.]
189. Magré sèpènt ni ti ziè li ka vouè clè bien. (Bien que le serpent ait de petits yeux, il voit très-clair.)  
“Though the serpent has little eyes, he sees very well.”<sup>3</sup>—[Martinique.]
190. Maite cabrite mandé li; ous pas capabe di li plainda. (Le maître du cabrit le demande, vous ne pouvez pas vous en plaindre.)  
“The kid’s owner asks for it; you can’t blame him.”<sup>4</sup>—[Hayti.]
191. Maladie vine làhaut iève; li alle làhaut tourtie. (La maladie vient sur le lièvre; elle part [s’en va] sur la tortue.)  
“Sickness comes riding upon a hare; but goes away riding upon a tortoise.”<sup>5</sup>—[Mauritius.]
192. Mal hé pas ka châger con lapliè. (Lit: Le malheur ne se charge pas comme la pluie.)  
“Misfortune doesn’t t’reaten like rain.”<sup>6</sup>—[Trinidad.]
193. Mamans ka fair iches, main pas khèrs yeaux. (Les mères font les enfants, mais non leurs coeurs.)  
“Mothers make children; but not children’s hearts.”<sup>7</sup>—[Trinidad.]
194. Manger yon fois pas ka riser dents. (Manger une fois n’use pas les dents.)  
“Eating once doesn’t wear out the teeth.”<sup>8</sup>—[Trinidad.]
195. Mari napas trouvé dans vétivére. (Un mari ne se trouve pas dans le vétiver.)  
“You won’t find a husband in the vetiver.”<sup>9</sup>—[Mauritius.]
196. Mariaze napas pariaze; ménaze napas badinaze. (Le mariage n’est pas un pari; le ménage n’est pas un badinage.)  
“Marriage is no trifling wager, and housekeeping is no sport.”<sup>10</sup>—[Mauritius.]
197. Marié éne boutiéye vide. (Epouser une bouteille vide.)  
“Marry an empty bottle.”—Meaning to marry a girl without a dowry.—[Mauritius.]
198. \* Maringouin perdi so tempa quand li piqué calman. (Le maringoin perd son temps quand il pique le caiman.)  
“The mosquito loses his time when he tries to sting the alligator.”<sup>11</sup>—[Louisiana.]

<sup>1</sup> A widely-spread proverb. In Louisiana we say *piti li* or *so piti*, instead of “yche” or “iche li.” In Martinique Creole: *Macaque pas janmain trouve yche li laide*.

<sup>2</sup> Because the orange tree is thorny.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Bigelow, in *Harper’s Magazine*, explains the use of this proverb by a creditor to a debtor.

<sup>4</sup> *Le temps se charge*, in French signifies that it is clouding up, threatening rain—lit: “loading up.” Misfortune does not threaten before it falls.

<sup>5</sup> The delightfully fragrant grass, well-known to pharmacists as the *Andropogon muri-catus* or *Vetiveria odorata* is used in Mauritius to thatch cabins with. A broad border of this grass is usually planted around each square of sugar-cane. It grows tall enough to conceal a man, or a couple of lovers holding a rendezvous. Hence the wholesome warning.

<sup>6</sup> Ripost to a threat—as we would say: “All that has as little effect on me as water on a duck’s back!”

199. Marré connm yon paqué crabe. (Amarré comme un paquet de crabes.)  
 "Tangled up, or tied up, like a bundle of crabs."—Said of people notoriously clumsy.<sup>1</sup>  
 —[Martinique.]
200. Mègue comment çatte qui manze lérats-misqué. (Maigre comme un chat qui mange des rats musqués.)  
 "Thin as a cat that lives on musk-rats."—[Mauritius.]
201. Même baton qui batte chein nouér-là, pé batte chein blanc-là. (Le même bâton qui bat le chien noir peut battre le chien blanc.)  
 "The same stick that beats the black dog can beat the white."<sup>2</sup>—[Trinidad.]
202. Menti ça pas si mal connm palé mal moun. (Le mensonge n'est pas si mauvais que de parler mal des autres.)  
 "Lying isn't as bad as speaking badly about people."—Lying is less wicked than calumny.—[Martinique.]
203. \* Merci pas couté arien. ("Merci" ne coûte rien.)  
 "Thanks cost nothing."—[Louisiana.]
204. \* Metté milâtre enhaut choual, li va dî négresse pas so maman. (Mettez un mulâtre [en haut] sur un cheval—it [va dire] dira qu'une négresse n'est pas sa maman.)  
 "Just put a mulatto on horseback, and he'll tell you his mother was'nt a negress."<sup>3</sup>—[Louisiana.]
205. Mié vaut mangé lamori ou, qu'codeinne leszauft. (Il vaut mieux de manger [de] la morue [qui est] à vous que le coq-d'Inde aux autres.)  
 "Better to eat one's own codfish than another person's turkey-cock."—[Martinique.]
206. Milatt ka batt, cabritt ka mò. (Les mulâtres se battent, ce sont les cabrils qui meurent.)  
 "When the mulattoes get to fighting, the goats get killed."<sup>4</sup>—[Martinique.]
207. Misè fè macaque mangé piment. (La misère force le macaque à manger du piment.)  
 "Misery makes the monkey eat red pepper."—[Martinique.]
208. \* "Mo bien comm mo yé," parole rare. ("Je me trouve bien comme je suis"—ces sont des paroles rares.)  
 "'I'm well enough as I am,' are words one doesn't often hear."—[Louisiana.]
209. \* Mo va pas prê é vous bâton pou cassé mo latête. (Je ne vais vous prêter un bâton pour me casser la tête.)  
 "I'm not going to lend you a stick to break my head with."—[Louisiana.]

<sup>1</sup> Anyone who has ever seen a heap of live crabs in a basket, will comprehend the fun of this saying—intimating that the sinews of the gawkish person are tangled up as hopelessly as crabs in a market-basket.

<sup>2</sup> As one should observe: "I've whipped better men than you."

<sup>3</sup> I usually give but one example of a proverb when it occurs in several dialects; but the Martinique form of this proverb is too amusing to omit. See Prov. 287.

<sup>4</sup> The feeling of the black to the mulatto is likewise revealed in the following dictum:—Nègue pôté maïs dans so lapoche pou volé poule;—milatt pôté cordon dans so lapoche pou volé choual;—nhomme blanc pôté larzan dans so lapoche pou trompé fille. (Le nègre porte du maïs dans sa poche pour voler des poules;—le mulâtre porte un cordon dans sa poche pour voler des chevaux;—l'homme blanc porte de l'argent dans sa poche pour tromper les filles.)

"The negro carries corn in his pocket to [help him to] steal chickens; the mulatto carries a rope in his pocket to steal horses; the white man carries money in his pocket to deceive girls."—[Louisiana.]

210. Moin ainmein plis yon balaou jòdi là qu'taza dimain. (J'aime mieux un balaou aujourd'hui qu'un tazard demain.)  
"I'd rather have horn-fish to-day, than mackerel to-morrow."<sup>1</sup>—[Martinique.]
211. Moin pas ka prend dithé pou flève li. (Je ne veux pas prendre du thé pour sa fièvre.)  
"I don't propose to drink tea for his fever."<sup>2</sup>—[Martinique.]
212. Montagnes zamés zoinde, domounde zoinde. (Les montagnes ne se rencontrent jamais, les hommes se rencontrent.)  
"Mountains, only, never meet; men meet."—We are certain to encounter friends and enemies under the most unlikely circumstances."—[Mauritius.]
213. Mounn ouè défaut les-zautt, yo pas ni zié pou ta yo. (Les gens voient les défauts des autres, ils n'ont pas d'yeux pour les leurs.)  
"Folks see the faults of others; they have no eyes for their own."<sup>3</sup>—[Martinique.]
214. Moustique ptit; més lhére li chanté vous zoréye plein. (Le moustique est petit; mais quand il chante, votre oreille en est pleine.)  
"The mosquito is little; but when he sings, your ears are full of him."—[Mauritius.]
215. Napas éna fromaze qui napas trouve so macathia. (Il n'y a pas de fromage qui ne trouve son pain bis.)  
"There's no cheese but what can find brown bread."<sup>4</sup>—[Mauritius.]
216. Napas rémié fimié sec. (Ne remuez pas le fumier sec.)  
"Don't stir up dry manure."—Said to those who desire to resurrect forgotten scandal.—[Mauritius.]
217. Napas vous sangsie qui a monté lâhaut moi. (Ce n'est pas votre sangsue qui montera sur moi.)  
"Your leech isn't going to climb on me." That is: you shan't take advantage of me.—[Mauritius.]
218. Napas vous laliante darzent qui a monté lâhaut mo tonelle. (Ce n'est pas votre liane d'argent qui montera sur ma tonnelle.)  
"It isn't your silver creeper that is going to climb over my summer house."<sup>5</sup>—[Mauritius.]

<sup>1</sup> "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." The translation is not literal. The *tazard* or *thazard*, although belonging to the scomber family, is not a true mackerel. *Balaou* is one Creole name for *l'âgulette de mer*, hornfish [?].

<sup>2</sup> Or better still: I don't intend to drink tea just because he has the fever." In other words, "I don't intend to bother myself with other people's troubles."....The tea referred to is one of those old Creole preparations taken during fevers—the *tisane* of the black nurses; perhaps the cooling sassafras, or orange-leaf tea administered to sufferers from *dengue* in New Orleans.

<sup>3</sup> This proverb, not being of true Creole origin, receives a place here as an illustration of effective patois. In Louisiana we never say *ta yo*, but *so quenne*....Were all proverbs used by the Creole-speaking people included in this collection, it would be considerably longer. Nearly all familiar English proverbs have received Creole adoption, with slight modifications; for example, instead of "putting the cart before the horse," the Mauritian negro mette *charrette devant mât*, puts the cart before the *mule*—an animal with which he is more familiar.

<sup>4</sup> That is to say, whoever has a bit of cheese can always find a bit of brown bread to eat with it. There never was a girl so ugly that she could not find a husband.

<sup>5</sup> Said by young girls to those whose advances are disagreeable. *Khe lanmou pas ka sauté* ("heart-of-love does not yet leap") would be the more polite response of a Martinique girl.

219. \*Napas zoué av difé; wou a boulé vous cimise. (Ne jouez pas avec le feu; vous vous brûlez la chemise.)  
 "Play with the fire and you'll burn your shirt." This proverb appears to be current wherever any form of the patois prevails."—[Mauritius.]
220. Nion doight pas jamain mangé calalou. (Avec un seul doigt on ne peut jamais manger du calalou.)  
 "You can't eat calalou with one finger."<sup>1</sup>—[Hayti.]
221. Nhomme mort, zhèbes ka lever douvant lapôte li. ([Quand] un homme [est] morte, l'herbe pousse [lit. : s'élève] devant sa porte.)  
 "When a man is dead, the grass grows tall before his door."—[Trinidad.]
222. Nououi chouval pou baille zofficié monté. (Nourrir des chevaux pour les donner à monter aux officiers.)  
 "Feed horses for officers to ride." To be the victim of one's own foolish liberality."<sup>2</sup>  
 —[Martinique.]
223. \*Oimso soulié savé si bas tini trou. (Le soulier seul sait si le bas a un trou.)  
 "The shoe only knows whether the stockings have holes."<sup>3</sup>—[Guyane.]
224. Oti tini zos tini chien. (Où il y a des os il y a des chiens.)  
 "Wherever there are bones, there are dogs." Meaning that when one is rich, one has plenty of friends."—[Martinique.]
225. Ou faché avec gan chemin, que côté ou va passé? (Vous vous fachez avec le grand chemin, de quel côté irez-vous?)  
 "If you get angry with the high road, what way will you go?"—[Hayti.]
226. Ou fait semblant mourir, moin fait semblant enterrer ou. (Faites semblant de mourir, et moi je ferai semblant de vous enterrer.)  
 "You pretend to die; and I'll pretend to bury you."<sup>4</sup>—[Hayti.]
227. Ou sauté, ou tombé la menme. (Vous sautez, vous tombez tout de même.)  
 "You jump, but you come down all the same."<sup>4</sup>—[Martinique.]
228. \*Où y'en a charogne, y'en a carenco. (Où il a charogne, il y a des busards.)  
 "Wherever there's carrion, there are buzzards."<sup>5</sup>—[Louisiana.]
229. Ous pôncor travesser lârivière;—pas jirez maman caiman. (Vous n'avez pas encore traversé la rivière—ne jurez [maudissez] pas la maman du caiman.)  
 "You haven't crossed the river yet; don't curse at the crocodile's mother."<sup>6</sup>—[Trinidad.]

<sup>1</sup>The West Indian *calalou* is made almost precisely like our *gumbo-soup*. The word is of African origin according to Turiault.

<sup>2</sup>In the Martinique dialect it is: *O est soulier qui save si bas tini trou*. In the Trinidad patois: *Cé soulier tout-séi qui save si bas tini trou* (Thomas). In Louisiana Creole: *C'est soulier nek connin si bas gagnin trou*. "Nek," compound from French *ne...que*—"only."

<sup>3</sup>Said to those who relate improbable stories of woe."

<sup>4</sup>Just so high as you jump, so great the fall. The higher our ambition, the greater the peril of failure.

<sup>5</sup>This is one of several instances of the Creole adoption of English words. The name "carrion-crow" has been applied to the buzzard in Louisiana from an early period of its American history.

<sup>6</sup>"Don't halloo till you're out of the wood!"

230. Padon pas ka guéri bosse. ("Pardon" ne guérit pas la bosse.)  
     " Asking pardon doesn't cure the bump." 1—[Martinique.]
231. Pâlér pas rimède. (Parler n'est pas un remède.)  
     " Talking is no remedy." In Creole the word signifies medicine as well as *remedy*.—[Trinidad.]
232. Pâlér touop ka lever chein nans dômi. (Trop parler [c'est ça qui] éveille le chien en dormi.)  
     " Talking too much arouses the dog from sleep." 2—[Trinidad.]
233. Paoûoles pas tini coulèr. (Les paroles n'ont pas de couleur.)  
     " Words have no color."—This is generally said to people who stare a speaker out of countenance.—[Trinidad.]
234. Paoûoles pas couté cher. (Les paroles ne coûtent pas cher.)  
     " Words are cheap." In Martinique the phrase is *Paoûoles pas châge*: ("Words are no weight to carry.")—[Trinidad.]
235. \*Parole trop forte, machoir gonfié. (Par la parole trop forte, la machoir est gonfiée.)  
     " By talking too loud the jaw becomes swelled." 3—[Louisiana.]
236. Pas fôte langue qui fair bef pas sa pâlér. (Ce n'est pas à faute de langue que le bœuf ne sait pas parler.)  
     " It isn't for want of tongue that the ox can't talk."—[Trinidad.]
237. Pas jou' moin bien changé, moin ka rencontré nénette moins. (Ce n'est pas le jour que je suis bien changé que je vais rencontrer ma marraine.)  
     " It isn't on the day I am greatly changed" [when I am most unfortunate] "that I am going to meet my godmother."—[Martinique.]
238. Pas menme jou ou mangé tè ou vini enflé. (Ce n'est pas le même jour que vous mangez que vous vous trouvez enflé).  
     " It isn't the same day you eat that you find yourself puffed up." 4—[Martinique.]
239. Pauve moune bail déjeuner nans quior. (Les pauvres gens vous donnent à déjeuner dans leurs coeurs).  
     " Poor folks give breakfast with their hearts."—[Hayti.]
240. \* Pis faibe toujou tini tò. (Le plus faible a toujours tort).  
     " The weakest is always in the wrong."—[Martinique.]
241. \* Piti à piti, zozo fait son nid. (Petit à petit, l'oiseau fait son nid.)  
     " Little by little the bird builds its nest."—[Louisiana.]

<sup>1</sup> In the Creole of Guyana this proverb exists in very curious form: *Ago pa guéri maleng*,—"the excuse doesn't cure the hurt." M. Alfred de Saint-Quentin in his work upon this remarkably fantastic and melodious Creole dialect, says that *Ago* is the only word of purely African origin he has been able to find in the Guyana patois. On the Gold coast *ago!* is a warning cry: "Take care!—clear the way!" The Guyana slaves retained the word in a different sense. The negro who accidentally jostles anybody, still exclaims *Ago!*—but it now means "Beg pardon," or "Excuse me!"

<sup>2</sup> Talking too freely about our projects helps our enemies to thwart our plans.

<sup>3</sup> Literally: "Word too strong, jaw swelled up." Seems to imply the *indirect* rather than the direct consequence of using violent language—viz., a severe beating from the person abused.

<sup>4</sup> That is to say that the worst results of folly do not always manifest themselves when expected.

242. Piti pas coûte so moman, li ka mori gran solé midi. (Petit qui n'écoute pas sa maman meurt au grand soleil de midi).  
 " Little boy who won't listen to his mother dies under the noonday sun." 1—[Guyana.]
243. Plis vaut mié vous ptit gagne larrime qui vous arrace son nez. (Il vaut mieux laisser votre enfant morveux que de lui arracher le nez).  
 " Better let your child be snotty, than pull his nose off."—[Mauritius.]
244. Pou manje, tou bon; pou pâlé pas tou parole. (Pour manger, tout est bon; pour parler, pas toute parole).  
 " Anything is good enough to eat; but every word is not good enough to be spoken." 2—[Guyana.]
245. Poule pas ka vanté bouillon yo. (Les poules ne vantent pas leur [propre] bouillon.)  
 " The chickens don't brag about their own soup;" i. e. chicken-soup.—[Martinique.]
246. Poule qui canté ça même qui fine pondé. (La poule qui chante est celle-là même qui a pondu).  
 " It's the cackling hen that has laid the egg."—[Mauritius.]
247. Poule qui fêre dèz dizèfs zamés touyé. (La poule qui fait deux œufs n'est jamais tuée).  
 " The hen that lays two eggs is never killed."—[Mauritius.]
248. \* Pranne garde vaut miè passé mandé pardon. (Prendre garde vaut mieux que demander pardon.)  
 " It is better to take care beforehand than to ask pardon afterward."—[Louisiana.]
249. Ptit lasoil ptit coco, grand lasoil grand coco. (Petite soif, petit coco; grande soif, grand coco.)  
 " Little thirst, a little cocoa-nut; big thirst, a big cocoa-nut." 4—[Mauritius.]
250. Ptit mie tombe, ramassé li; Chrétien tombe, pas ramassé li. (Quand une petite mie tombe, on la ramasse; quand un Chrétien tombe, on ne le ramasse pas [i. e., on ne l'aide pas à se relever].)  
 " If a little crumb falls, it is picked up; if a Christian falls, he is not picked up."—[Hayti.]
251. \* Quand bois tombé, cabri monté. (Quand l'arbre tombe, le cabri monte.)  
 " When the tree falls, the kid can climb it." 5—[Louisiana.]
252. Quand boudin mòdè, cé pas épi bell plimmé yo ka plein li. (Quand le ventre crie, ce n'est pas avec de beaux habits qu'on le remplit.)  
 " When your stomach gnaws you, it isn't with fine clothes that you can fill it."—[Martinique.]

<sup>1</sup> All Creole mothers are careful to keep their children from reckless play in the sun, which is peculiarly treacherous in those latitudes where the dialect is spoken. Hence the proverb, applicable to any circumstance in which good advice is reluctantly received.

<sup>2</sup> In the Martinique dialect: *Tout mangé, tout paule pas bon pou di.*—[Turiault.]

<sup>3</sup> The sound of the French *eu* is rarely preserved in Creole. *L'heure* becomes *l'hore*; *peu*, becomes *pè*. The Creole-speaking negro says, *Yonne, dè, tois, quatre, nòf*, instead of "un, deux, trois, quatre, neuf."

<sup>4</sup> Like the old-country saying: "Big horse, big feed." The cocoa-nut shell was formerly the slave's drinking cup in Mauritius.

<sup>5</sup> This saying has quite a variety of curious applications. The last time I heard it, a Creole negress was informing me that the master of the house in which she worked was lying at the point of death: "*paue diabe!*" I asked after the health of her mistress. " *Ah! Madame se porte bien; mais . . . quand bois tombé cabri monté.*" she replied, half in French, half in her own patois; signifying that after the husband's death, wife and children would find themselves reduced to destitution.

<sup>6</sup> Literally "feathers"—"plimm," *plumes*. Adopted from a Creole version of one of Lafontaine's fables.

253. \*Quand boyaux grogné, bel 'evite pas fait yé pé. (Quand les boyaux grognent, un bel habit ne leur fait pas se taire ; lit., ne leur fait pas paix.)  
"When the bowels growl a fine coat won't make them hold their peace."—[Louisiana.]
254. Quand cannari pas bouf pou ou, ou donè janmain découvri li. (Quand le pôt ne bout pas pour vous, vous ne devez jamais le découvrir.)  
"When the pot won't boil for you, you must never take the lid off."—[Martinique.]
255. Quand canon causé, fusil honté. (Quand le canon parle, le fusil a honte.)  
"When the cannon speaks, the gun is ashamed."—[Mauritius.]
256. Quand diabe alle lamesse li caciotte so laquée. (Quand le diable va à la messe, il cache sa queue.)  
"When the Devil goes to mass he hides his tail."—[Mauritius.]
257. Quand diabe voulé prend vous li cause bondié av vous. (Quand le diable veut vous prendre il vous parle de Bon Dieu.)  
"When the devil wants to get hold of you, he chats to you about God." Lit.: "He talks Good God to you."—[Mauritius.]
258. Quand done vous bourique vous pas bisoin guetté so labride. (Quand on vous donne un âne, vous ne devez pas regarder sa bride.)  
"When somebody gives you a donkey, you musn't examine the bridle."—Never look a gift-horse in the mouth.—[Mauritius.]
259. Quand femme léve so robe diabe guetté so lazambe. (Quand une femme relève sa robe le diable regarde sa jambe.)  
"When a woman lifts her dress, the devil looks at her leg."—[Mauritius.]
260. Quand gagne larmoire napas quétte coffre. (Quand on a l'armoire on ne regarde pas les coffres.)  
"As soon as one gets a clothes-press, one never looks at the trunk."—[Mauritius.]

<sup>1</sup> The words *pè*, *pé*, in Creole are distinguishable only by their accentuation. *Peur* (fear); *peu* (a little); *paix* (peace, or "hush"); *peut* (can), all take the form *pè* or *pé* in various Creole dialects. *Ipas nî pè sépent;* "he is not afraid of snakes." Sometimes one can guess the meaning only by the context, as in the Martinique saying: *Pè baf pè caca baf.* "Few oxen, little ox-dung;" i.e., "little money, little trouble." The use of "*pè*" for *père* (father), reminds us of a curious note in the Creole studies of the brothers Saint-Quentin (See BIBLIOGRAPHY). In the forests of Guiana there is a bird whose song much resembles that of our Louisiana mocking-bird, but which is far more sonorous and solemn. The Creole negroes call it ZOZO MONPÈ (*l'oiseau mon-père*), lit., "The my-father bird." Now *monpè* is the Creole name for a priest; as if we should say "a my-father" instead of "a priest." The bird's song, powerful, solemn, far-echoing through the great aisles of the woods by night, suggested the chant of a *monpè*, a "ghostly father;" and its name might be freely translated by "the priest-bird."

<sup>2</sup> "Watched pot never boils." The *canari* was a clay pot as the following Creole refrain testifies:

Ya pas bouillon pou vous, macommère ;  
Canari cassé dans difé (bis).  
Bouillon renversé dans difé  
Ya pas bouillon pou vous, macommère  
Canari cassé dans difé.

[“There’s no soup for you, my gossiping friend; the pot’s broken in the fire; the soup is spilled in the fire,” etc.]

<sup>3</sup> A wooden chest or trunk is the first desideratum of the negro housewife. As soon as the family is able to purchase a clothes-press, or (as we call it in Louisiana) "armoires," it is considered quite a prosperous household by Mauritian colored folk. The chest, Balmacq tells us, is the clothes-press of the poor. "After the bed comes the chest, and next the accordéon!"

261. Quand lamôrt vini, vous pense vous lavie. (Quand la mort vient, vous pensez à votre vie.)  
       "It's when death comes that you think about your life."—[Mauritius.]
262. Quand l'ébras trop courte, napas zoinde. (Quand les bras son trop courts, ils ne se rejoignent pas.)  
       "When one's arms are too short, they won't go round."<sup>1</sup>—[Mauritius.]
263. Quand l'écie tombé, tout mouces va maillé. (Quand le ciel tombera, toutes les mouches seront prises.)  
       "When the sky falls all the flies will be caught."<sup>2</sup>—[Mauritius.]
264. \* Quand li gagnin kichose dans so latête, ce pas dans so lapiè. (Quand il a quelque chose dans sa tête, ce n'est pas dans son pied.)  
       "When he gets something into his head, it isn't in his foot."<sup>3</sup>—[Louisiana.]
265. Quand l'ipièd glissé, restant sivré. (Quand le pied glisse, le reste suit.)  
       "When the foot slips the rest follows."—[Mauritius.]
266. Quand maite chanté, nègue dansé; quand 'economie sifflé, nègue sauté. (Quand le maître chante, le nègre danse; quand l'économie siffle, le nègre saute.)  
       "When the master sings the negro dances; but when the overseer only whistles, the negro jumps."—A relic of the old slave-day Creole folklore.—[Louisiana.]
267. Quand milatt tini yon vié chouvral yo dit nègress pas manman yo. (Quand les mulâtres ont un vieux cheval ils disent que les nègresses ne sont pas leurs mères.)  
       "As soon as a mulatto is able to own an old horse, he will tell you that his mother wasn't a nigger." [Martinique.]
268. \* Quand napas maman, téte grand-maman. (Quand n'a pas sa mère, on tête sa grand-mère.)  
       "When one has no mother, one must be suckled by one's grandmother."—[Louisiana.]
269. Quand ou tini malhé sépent mòié ou pa lakhè. (Quand vous êtes dans le malheur le serpent vous mord par la queue.)  
       "When you're in ill-luck, a snake can bite you even with its tail."—[Martinique.]
270. Quand ou mangé évec guiaibe, quimbé cuillè ou longue. (Quand vous mangez avec le diable, tenez votre cuillère longue.)  
       "When you eat with the devil, see that your spoon is long."—[Martinique.]
271. \* Quand patate tchuite, faut mangé li. (Quand la patate est cuite, il faut la manger.)  
       "When the sweet potato is cooked, it must be eaten."<sup>4</sup>—[Louisiana.]
272. Quand poul ou tini zé, pas mette li dans canari. (Quand votre poule pond des œufs, ne la mettez pas dans le pot.)  
       "When your hen is laying, don't put her in the pot."<sup>5</sup>—[Martinique.]

<sup>1</sup> It is needless to undertake what we have not ability to carry out.<sup>2</sup> Said to those who talk hopefully of impossibilities.<sup>3</sup> Refers to obstinacy. A man may be compelled to move his feet, but not<sup>4</sup> to change his resolve.<sup>4</sup> This differs a little from the spelling adopted by Gottschalk in his *Bamboula*—"Quand patate-la cuite ma va mangé li." The proverb is used in the sense of our saying: "Strike the iron while it's hot."<sup>5</sup> Like our saying about killing the goose that laid the golden eggs.

273. Quand prend trop bououup, li glissé. (Quand on prend trop [lit.: "trop beaucoup"], cela glisse.  
"Grab for too much, and it slips away from you."—[Mauritius.]
274. Quand vente crié zoréyes sourde. (Quand le ventre crie, les oreilles sont sourdes.)  
"When the belly cries, the ears are deaf."—[Mauritius.]
275. Quand vente fainm, sипrit vini. (Quand le ventre a fainm, l'esprit vient.)  
"An empty stomach brings wit;"—lit.: When the stomach is empty, wit comes."<sup>1</sup>  
—[Mauritius.]
276. Quand vous guette lâhaut vous liziés vine ptit. (Quand vous regardez en haut, vos yeux rapetissent.)  
"When you look overhead, your eyes become small."—[Mauritius.]
277. Quand yo baille ou tête bef pou mangé, n'a pas peur zieux li. (Quand on vous donne une tête de bœuf à manger n'avez pas peur de ses yeux.)  
"When you are given an ox's head to eat, don't be afraid of his eyes."—[Hayti]
278. Quiquefois wou plante zharcots rouze ; zharcots blance qui poussé. (Quiquefois vous plantez des haricots rouges, et ce sont des haricots blancs qui poussent.)  
"Sometimes you sow red beans, and white beans grow." "The best-laid plans of mice and men gang aft a-gley."—[Mauritius.]
279. Quand yon bâtimènt cassé ça pas empêché les zautt navigué. (Quand un bâtimènt est cassé, ça n'empêche pas les autres de naviguer.)  
"When a ship is broken (*wrecked*), the accident does not prevent others from sailing."<sup>2</sup>  
—[Martinique.]
280. Qui mélè zefs nans calenda oñoches? (Qui a mélè (mis) des œufs dans la calinda des roches [pierrres.]?)  
"What business have eggs in the calinda—i. e. dance-of stones?" (*Calinda*, said to be derived from the Spanish *que linda!*—"how beautiful!")<sup>3</sup>—[Trinidad.]
281. Rann sévice baill mal dos. (Rendre service donne mal au dos.)  
"Doing favors gives one the back-ache."—[Martinique.]
282. \*Ratte mangé canne, zanzoli mourir innocent. (Le rat mange la canne-[à-sucre], le lézard en meurt.)  
"'Tis the rat eats the cane; but the lizard dies for it."<sup>4</sup>—[Louisiana.]
283. Ravett pas janmain asséz fou pou li allé lapôte pouleillé. (Le ravet n'est jamais assez fou pour aller à la porte du poulailler.)  
"The cockroach is never silly enough to approach the door of the hen-house."—  
[Martinique.]

<sup>1</sup> *Wit*, that is, "mother-wit"—common-sense.<sup>2</sup> There is a Portuguese proverb to the same effect: "Shipwrecks have never deterred navigation."<sup>3</sup> The author of *Les Bambous* mentions the *bèlè*, *caleinda*, *guitouba* and *biquine*, slave-dances of Martinique. *Dansé yan calenda marré* (to dance the *calinda* or *caleinda* tied up) meant to receive a whipping.<sup>4</sup> This proverb is certainly of West Indian origin, though I first obtained it from a Louisianian. In consequence of the depredations committed by rats in the West-Indian cane-fields, it is customary after the crop has been taken off, to fire the dry cane tops and leave. The blaze, spreading over the fields, destroys many rats, but also a variety of harmless lizards and other creatures.

284. \*Ravette pas jamain tini raison douvant poule. (Le ravet n'a jamais raison devant la poule.)  
     “Cockroach is never in the right where the fowl is concerned”—(lit.: *before the fowl*).<sup>1</sup>  
     —[Trinidad.]
285. Rasters tini zorefes. (Les [rosiers?] buissons ont des oreilles.)  
     “Bushes have ears.”—[Trinidad.]
286. \*Rendé service, baillé chagrin. (Rendre service donne du chagrin.)  
     “Doing favors brings sorrow.”—[Louisiana.]
287. Roce entété, més quand téti cause av li, li répondé. (La roche est entêtée, mais quand le tête lui parle, elle répond.)  
     “The rock's hard-headed ; but when the stone-hammer speaks to him, he answers”  
     —[Tête means an obstinate person, also a stone-hammer].<sup>2</sup>—[Mauritius.]
288. Sac vide pas ka tienne douboutt. (Un sac vide ne peut pas se tenir debout.)  
     “An empty sack cannot stand up.” One cannot work with an empty stomach.—  
     [Martinique.]
289. Sèpent dit li pas rhat mounn-la qui cué li ; c'est ça qui dit, “Mi sèpent!” (Le serpent dit qu'il ne hait pas la personne qui le tue ; que c'est celle qui dit, “Voilà le serpent!”)  
     “The snake says he doesn't hate the person who kills him, but the one who calls out,  
     ‘Look at the snake!’”—[Martinique.]
290. Serin dérobé ; maille bengali. (Le serin se derobe ; prenez le bengali.)  
     “When the canary can't be found, take the bengalee.” When you can't find what  
     you like, be content with what you can get.”—[Mauritius.]
291. Si coulev oufél viv, li pas prouminée grand-chimin. (Si la couleuvre veut vivre, elle ne  
     se promène pas dans le grand chemin).  
     “If the snake cares to live, it doesn't journey upon the high-road.”—[Guyana.]
292. Si coulèva pas té fonté,<sup>3</sup> femmes sé pouend li fair ribans jipes. (Si la couleuvre n'était  
     pas effrontée, les femmes la prendraient pour en faire des rubans de jupes).  
     “If the snake wasn't spunky, women would use it for petticoat strings.”—[Trinidad.]
293. Si crapaud die ous caiman tini mal ziez, coèr-li. (Si le crapaud vous dit que le caiman a  
     mal aux yeux, croyez-le).  
     “If the frog tells you the alligator has sore eyes, believe him!”—[Trinidad.]
294. Si jipon ou k'allé bien, pas chaché mette kilott nhomme ou. (Si votre jupon vous va  
     bien, ne cherchez pas à mettre la culotte de votre mari.)  
     “If your petticoat fits you well, don't try to put on your husband's breeches.”—  
     [Martinique.]

<sup>1</sup> I find this proverb in every dialect I have been able to study. In Martinique Creole the words vary slightly : “Douvant poule ravett pas ni raison.”

<sup>2</sup> This is another example of double-punning, of which we have already had a specimen in Prov. 183.

<sup>3</sup> Fonté (for effronté) has quite an extensive meaning in Creole. It may refer to the impudence of a badly-brought-up child, or to the over-familiarity on the part of an adult ; but it may also refer to high spirit, pluck, independence of manner. A colored mother once told me I should be surprised to see how fonté her son had become since he had been going to school. She meant, of course, that the lad was growing “smart,” active, plucky.

<sup>4</sup> Similarity of habits and of experience is necessary to guarantee the trustworthiness of testimony regarding those we do not know.

295. \* Si lamèr té bouilli, poissôns aré tchuite. (Si la mer bouillait, les poissons seraient cuits).  
     “ If the sea were to boil, the fishes would be cooked.”—[Louisiana.]
296. Si lasavane té ka palé nous sé connaît trop désigret. (Si la savanne parlait, nous connaîtrions trop de secrets).  
     “ If the fields could talk, we should know too many secrets.”<sup>1</sup>—[Martinique.]
297. Si l'éphant pas té savé boyaux li gouous, li pas sé valé calebasses. (Si l'éléphant n'avait pas su qu'il avait de gros boyaux, il n'aurait pas avalé des calabashes).  
     “ If the elephant didn't know that he had big guts, he wouldn't have swallowed calabashes.”—[Trinidad.]
298. \* Si-moin-tè connaît pas janmain douvant; li toujou defè. (Si je-l'avais-su n'est jamais devant; il vient toujours derrière.)  
     “ 'If I had-only-known' is never before one; he always comes behind.”—[Martinique.]
299. Si moin té gagnin moussa, moin té mangé'gombo. (Si j'avais du moussa, je mangerais du gombo).  
     “ If I had some *moussa*<sup>2</sup> I would eat some *gombo*.” If I had the necessary I could enjoy the superfluous.”—[Martinique.]
300. Si té pas gagné soupé nens moune, moune ka touffé. (S'il n'y avait pas de soupirs dans le monde, le monde étofferait).  
     “ If there were no sighing in the world, the world would stifle.”<sup>3</sup>—[Quoted by Alphonse Daudet.]
301. Si zannoli té bon viann, li sè pas ka drivé lassous baile. (Si le lézard était bon à manger [lit.: bonne viande], il ne se trouverait point sous une baïle).  
     “ If the lizard were good to eat, it would never be found under a tub.”<sup>4</sup>—[Martinique.]
302. Soleil couché ; malbèr pas jamain couché. (Le soleil se couche ; le malheur ne se couche jamais.)  
     “ The sun sets ; misfortune never sets.”—[Hayti.]
303. \* Soleil levé là ; li couché là. (Le soleil se lève là ; il se couche là).  
     “ Sun rises there [pointing to the east] ; he sets there” [pointing to the west].—[Louisiana.]
304. Souliers feraud, més domage zutes manze lipieds. (Les souliers sont elegants, mais c'est dommage qu'ils mangent les pieds.)  
     “ Shoes are fine things ; but it's a pity they bite one's feet.”<sup>5</sup>—[Mauritius]

<sup>1</sup> “ If walls had ears,” etc.

<sup>2</sup> *Mousse* is a word used in Martinique for hominy, or a sort of corn-mush which is used to thicken gombo-soup. In Louisiana boiled rice is similarly used.

<sup>3</sup> I found this proverb cited in Daudet's article on Tourguenoff in the November *Century* [1883]. The accentuation was incorrect. *Moun*, or *moune*, Creole form of French *monde*, is generally used to signify people in general—folks—not the world.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas gives us a briefer Trinidad version : *Si zandoi té bon viâne, le pas sè ka drivé* (il ne se trouverait pas) : “ If a lizard were good meat, it wouldn't easily be found.”

<sup>5</sup> A proverb common to all the dialects. In uttering it, with emphatic gesture, the negro signifies that there is no pride which will not be at last brought down, no grandeur which will not have an end.

“ M. Baissac tells us, in a very amusing way, how this proverb originated at the time of the negro emancipation in Mauritius, when 30,000 pairs of new shoes were distributed. Another saying, equally characteristic, was—“ *L'hôte li entré dans vous lacane, souliers dans lipieds ; lhôte li dans grand cimin, souliers dans mouçoirs* ” :—(When he enters your house, his shoes are on his feet; but once he is on the public road, they are in his handkerchief.)

205. \* Tafia toujou dîe la vérité. (Le tafia dit toujours la vérité.  
"Tafia always tells the truth."—[Louisiana.]
206. Tambou tini grand train pace endidans li vide. (Le tambour va [lit: tient] grand train parcequ'il est vide en dedans.)  
"The drum makes a great fuss because it is empty inside."—[Trinidad.]
207. Tampée ka gagnen malhèrs ka doublons pas sa gueri. (Un 'tampée' achète des malheurs que les doublons ne peuvent pas guérir.)  
"A penny buys troubles that doubloons cannot cure."—[Trinidad.]
208. \* "Tant-pis" n'a pas cabane. ("Tant-pis" n'a pas de cabane.)  
"'So-much-the-worse' has no cabin."—[Louisiana.]
209. Temps moune connaitre l'autre nans grand jou, nans nouïte yeaux pas bisoñ chandelle pou clairer yeaux. (Quand on connaît quelqu'un [lit: un autre] dans le grand jour, dans la nuit on n'a pas besoin d'une chandelle pour s'éclairer.)  
"When one person knows another by broad daylight, he doesn't need a candle to recognize him at night."—[Trinidad.]
210. \* Temps présent gagnin assez comme ça avec so quenne. (Le temps présent en a assez comme ça avec le sien.)  
"The present has enough to do to mind its own affairs."—[Louisiana.]
211. \* Ti chien, ti cordon. (Petit chien, petit lien.)  
"A little string for a little dog."—[Martinique.]
212. Ti haöhe coupé gouaus bois. (Une petite haöhe coupe un grand arbre.)  
"A little axe cuts down a big tree."—[Martinique.]
213. Ti moun connaît couri, yo pas connaît serré. (Les enfants—lit: "le petit monde"—savent courir; ils ne savent pas se cacher.)  
"Children (little folk) know how to run; they do not know how to hide."—[Martinique.]
214. Tig mò, chien ka prend pays. (Quand le tigre est mort, le chien prend le pays.)  
"When the tiger is dead, the dog takes [rules] the country."—[Martinique.]
215. Tòti sé vole si li tè tini plimm. (Le tortue volerait si elle avait des ailes.)  
"The tortoise would fly if it had wings."—[Martinique.]

<sup>1</sup> *Tafia* is the rum extracted from sugar-cane. "In vino veritas."

<sup>2</sup> In Louisiana Creole, *faire di-train* is commonly used in the sense of making a great noise, a big fuss. An old negro-servant might often be heard reproving the children of the house in some such fashion as this:—"Ga!—pouti tapé fait tou di-train ta!—Tous pé!—pas fait tou di-train mo di tol!" (Here, what are you making all that noise for?—are you going to keep quiet?—mustn't make so much noise, I tell you!")

<sup>3</sup> This proverb is the retort for the phrase: "So much the worse for you." Sometimes one might hear a colored servant for example, warning the children of the house to keep out of the kitchen, which in Creole residences usually opens into the great court-yard where the little ones play: "Eh, piti! faut pas rester là: vous ka casser tou!" ("Hey! little ones, mustn't stay there: you'll break everything!"). If the father or mother should then exclaim "Tant pis pour eux!"—so much the worse for them if they do break everything, you would hear the old woman reply: "Tant-pis n'a pas cabane!"—"So-much-the-worse has no cabin"—i.e., nothing to lose. She believes in an ounce of prevention rather than a pound of cure.

<sup>4</sup> When a person has once given us positive evidence of his true character, we do not need any information as to what that person will do under certain circumstances.

<sup>5</sup> Literally the proverb is almost untranslatable. It is cited to those who express needless apprehension of future misfortune. "Mo va gagnin malhèr"—(I am going to have trouble.) "Ah, ah! chère!—temps présent gagnin assez comme ça avec so quenne." (Ah, my dear! the present has enough trouble of its own.)

<sup>6</sup> "Pigs might fly," etc.

316. Tout bois c'est bois:  
 Main mapou  
 Pas 'cajou.  
 (Tout bois c'est du bois;  
 Mais le mapou  
 N'est pas de l'acajou.)  
 "All wood is wood; but mapou wood isn't mahogany (cedar)"<sup>1</sup>—[Trinidad.]
- 317 \* Tout ça c'est commerce Man Lison. (Tout ça c'est affaire de Maman Lison.)  
 "All that's like Mammy Lison's doings."<sup>2</sup>—[Louisiana.]
318. Tout ça qui poté zépron pas maquignon. (Tout homme qui porte épervons n'est pas maquignon.)  
 "Everybody who wears spurs isn't a jockey." All is not gold that glitters.—[Martinique.]
319. Toutt cabinett tini maringouin. (Tout cabinet content des maringouins.)  
 "Every bed-chamber has its mosquitoes in it."—Equivalent to our own proverb: A skeleton in every closet.—[Martinique.]
- 320.—\* Toutt joué c'est joué; mais cassé bois dans bonda macaque—ça pas joué. (Tout [façon de] jouer c'est jouer; mais ce n'est pas jouer que de casser du bois dans le derrière du macaque.)  
 . . . . . —[Martinique.]
321. \* Toutt jour c'est pas dimanche. (Tous les jours ne sont pas le dimanche.)  
 "Every day isn't Sunday."—Louisiana.
322. Tou jwé sa jwé; me bwa là zòrè sa pa jwé. (Tout [façon de] jouer c'est jouer; mais enfoncez du bois dans l'oreille n'est pas jouer.)  
 "All play is play; but poking a piece of wood into one's ear isn't play."—[Guyane.]
323. \*Tout macaque trouvoso piti joli. (Tout macaque trouve son petit joli.)  
 "Every monkey thinks its young one pretty."—[Louisiana.]
324. Toutt milet ni grand zaureilles. (Tout les mulets ont des grandes oreilles.)  
 "All mules have big ears."—Equivalent to our proverb: "Birds of a feather flock together."—Martinique.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas translates *cajou* by "cedar." *Acajou* in French, signifies mahogany, as it does also in Louisiana Creole. There is an old song, of which the refrain is:

*Cher bijou  
 D'icajou,  
 Mo laimin vous*

("My darling mahogany jewel, I love you!")

<sup>2</sup> Whenever a thing is badly done, this saying is used:—commerce in the Creole signifying almost the reverse of what it does in French. Who that traditional *Man Lison* was, I have never been able to find out.

<sup>3</sup> This ridiculous observation is unsuitable for translation. Nevertheless we have an English, or perhaps an American, proverb equally vulgar, which may have inspired, or been derived from, the Creole one. In the English saying, the words "joking" and "provoking" are used as rhymes. The moral is precisely similar to that of No. 322.

In old days the Creole story-teller would always announce his intention of beginning a tale by the exclamation "*T'm-t'm!*" whereupon the audience would shout in reply "*Bots sec!*" and the story-teller would cry again, "*Cassez-là,*" to which the chorus would add "... *dans tchu* (bonda) *macaque.*" Thus the story-teller intimated that he had no intention of merely "joking," but intended to tell the whole truth and nothing else—"a real good story"—*tots fois bonne conte!*

325.—\* Toutt mounn save ça qui ka bouf nens canari yo. (Toute personne sait ce qui bout dans son canari [marmite].)

"Everybody knows what boils in his own pot"—i. e., knows his own business best.<sup>1</sup>—[Martinique.]

326. Travai pas mal; cé ziex qui capons. [(Le travail ne fait pas du mal; c'est les yeux qui sont capons [lâches].)]

"Work doesn't hurt;—'tis the eyes that are cowards."—[Mauritius.]

327. Trop gratté bourié. (Trop gratter brûle [cuoit].)

"Too much scratching brings smarting."—[Mauritius.]

328. Trop profit crèvé poche. (Trop de profit crève la poche.)

"Too much profit bursts one's pockets."—[Martinique.]

329. Tropp bijou, gâde-mangé vide. (Trop de bijoux, garde-manger vide.)

"Too much jewelry, empty cupboard."—[Martinique.]

330. Vente enflé, mouces zaune té pique li. (Le ventre enflé, les mouches jaunes l'ont piqué.)<sup>2</sup>  
· · · · · —[Mauritius]

331. Vide éne boutéye pour rempli laute, qui li? (Vider une bouteille pour en remplir une autre, qu'est-ce?)

"What's the good of emptying one bottle only to fill another?"<sup>3</sup>—[Mauritius.]

332. \* Vie cannari ka fé bon bouillon. (Les vieux pots font les bonnes soupes.)

"It's the old pot that makes the good soup."—[Martinique.]

333. Vié coq, zène poule. (Vieux coq, jeune poule.)

"An old cock, a young hen."—[Mauritius.]

334. Volè pas ainmein vouè canmarade yo pôté sac. (Les voleurs n'aiment pas voir leurs camarades portant le sacs.)

"Thieves do not like to see their comrades carrying the bags."—[Martinique.]

335. Vous napas va montré vié zaco fère grimaces. (Vous ne montrerez pas à un vieux singe à faire des grimaces.)

"You can't teach an old monkey how to make faces."<sup>4</sup>—[Mauritius.]

336. Voyé chein, chein voyé lakhe li. (Envoyez le chien, et le chien envoie sa queue.)

"Send dog, and dog sends his tail."—Refers to those who obey orders only by proxy.—[Trinidad]

<sup>1</sup> In Thomas's Trinidad version: "Tout mounne connaitre ça qui ka bouf nans canari yeaux." In Louisiana Creole: "Chakin connin ça kapé bouilli dans so chodièr." "Canari" is sometimes used in our Creole, but rarely. I have only heard it in old songs. The iron pot (*chodièr*) or tin utensil has superseded the *canari*.

<sup>2</sup> This proverb is scarcely suitable for English translation; but the forcible and picturesque irony of it will be appreciated in M. Baissac's explanatory note: "Comment se l'expliquer autrement en dehors du mariage."

<sup>3</sup> Same signification as Prov. 138.

<sup>4</sup> Probably truer to human nature than our questionable statement concerning "honor among thieves." Mr. Bigelow, in his contribution to *Harper's Magazine*, cited a similar proverb in the Haytian dialect.

<sup>5</sup> "Teach your granny to suck eggs."

337. Yo ka quimbé! chrétiens pa langue yo, beff pa côte yo. (On prend les Chrétiens par la langue, les bœufs par les cornes.)  
"Christians are known by their tongues, oxen by their horns." (Literally, are taken by or caught by.)—[Martinique.]
338. Yon doëgt pas sa pouend pice. (Un seul doigt ne peut pas attraper des puces.)  
"One finger can't catch fleas."—[Martinique.]
339. \* Yon lanmain douè lavé laute. (Une main doit laver l'autre.)  
"One hand must wash the other."—You must not depend upon others to get you out of trouble.—[Martinique.]
340. Yon mauvais padle ka blessé plis qu'coup'd'roche. (Une mauvaise parole blesse plus qu'un coup-de-pierre.)  
"A wicked word hurts more than a blow from a stone."—[Martinique.]
341. Zaco malin, li-même té montré noir comment voler. (La singe est malin; c'est lui qui a montré au noir comment on vole.)  
"The monkey is sly; it was he that first taught the black man how to steal."—[Mauritius.]

<sup>1</sup> *Quimbé* is a verb of African origin. It survives in Louisiana Creole as *tchombé* or *chombo*:

*Caroline, zolie femme,  
Chombo moint dans collet.*

[“Caroline, pretty woman; put your arm about my neck!”—lit.: “take me by the neck.”]

There are other African words used by the older colored women, such as *macaya*, meaning to eat at all hours; and *Ouendé*, of which the sense is dubious. But the Congo verb *fifa*, to kiss; and the verbs *souye*, to flatter; *pougâle*, to abuse violently; and such nouns as *soff* (glutton), *yche* or *iche* (baby), which are preserved in other Creole dialects, are apparently unknown in Louisiana to-day.

In Chas. Jeannest's work, *Quatre Années au Congo* [Paris: Charpentier, 1883], I find a scanty vocabulary of words in the Flot dialect, the native dialect of many slaves imported into Louisiana and the West Indies. In this vocabulary the word *ouenda* is translated by “partir pour.” I fancy it also signifies “to be absent, and that it is synonymous with our Louisiana African-Creole *ouende*, preserved in the song:

*Ouendé, ou'ndé, macaya;  
Mo pas, 'parassé, macaya!  
Ouendé, ouendé, macaya;  
Mo bois bon divin, macaya!  
Ouendé, ou'n'dé, macaya;  
Mo mangé bon poulé, macaya!  
Ouendé, ouendé, macaya;...etc.*

This is one of the very few songs with a purely African refrain still sung in New Orleans. The theme seems to be that, the master and mistress of a house being absent, some slave is encouraging a slave-friend to eat excessively, to “stuff himself” with wine, chicken, etc. “They are gone, friend; eat, fill yourself! I'm not a bit ashamed; stuff yourself!—I'm drinking good wine; stuff yourself!—I'm eating good chicken; gorge yourself,” etc. Here *ouende* seems to mean “they are out; they are gone away,”—therefore there is no danger.

There is another Creole song with the same kind of double refrain, but the meaning of the African words I have not been able to discover.

*Nicolas, Nicolas, Nicolas, ou dindin;  
Nicolas, Nicolas, Nicolas marché ouaminon:  
Quand li marche  
Quarast, ourara !  
Quand li marche  
Quarast, ourara !*

[“Nicholas, etc., you are a turkey-cook! Nicholas walks *ouaminon*: when he walks, it is *ourast, ourara*.”] The idea is obvious enough; viz.: that Nicholas struts like a turkey-cook; but the precise signification of the three italicised words I have failed to learn.

342. Zaco napas guette so laquée; li guette pour son camarade. (Le singe ne regarde pas sa queue; il regarde celle de son voisin.)  
 "Monkey never watches his own tail; he watches his neighbor's."—[Mauritius.]
343. \*Zaffaire ça qui sotte, chien mangé diné yo. (Des choses [qui appartiennent] aux sots les chiens font leur dîner.)  
 "Dogs make their dinner upon what belongs to fools."—[Louisiana.]
344. \*Ziffé cabritt pa zaffé mouton. (L'affaire de la chèvre n'est pas l'affaire du mouton.)  
 "The goat's business is not the sheep's affair."<sup>1</sup>—[Martinique.]
345. Zaffére qui fine passé marien; laute qui pour vini qui li! (L'affaire passée n'est rien; c'est l'affaire à venir qui est le hic.)  
 "What's past is nothing; it's what's to come that's the rub."—[Mauritius.]
346. Zamais bœf senti so corne trop lourd. (Jamais le bœuf ne sent ses cornes trop lourdes.)  
 "The ox never finds his horns too heavy to carry."—[Mauritius.]
347. Zamés disel dire li salé. (Le sel ne dit jamais qu'il est salé.)  
 "The salt never says that it is salty." True virtue never boasts.—[Mauritius.]
348. Zaureille pas tini couv éti. (Les oreilles n'ont pas de couverture.)  
 "There is no covering for the ears."—[Martinique.]
349. Zié beké brûlé zié nèg. (Les yeux du blanc brûle les yeux du nègre.)  
 "The white man's eyes burn the negro's eyes."<sup>2</sup>—[Martinique.]
350. Zié rouge pas boulé savann. (Les yeux rouges ne brûlent pas la savane.)  
 "Red eyes can't burn the savannah." A better translation might be: "Red eyes can't start a prairie-fire." The meaning, is that mere anger avails nothing.—[Martinique.]
351. Zouré napas ena lentérement. (Les jurons n'ont pas d'enterrement.)  
 "Curses don't make funerals."—[Mauritius.]
352. Zozo paillenqui crié là-haut, coudevent vini. (Le paille-en-cul crie là-haut, le coup de vent vient.)  
 "When the tropic-bird screams overhead, a storm-wind is coming."—[Mauritius.]

<sup>1</sup> Seems to be the same in all Creole dialects, excepting that the rabbit is sometimes substituted for the sheep.

<sup>2</sup> Béké is translated by *blanc* in Turiault's work; but the witty author of *Les Bambous* writes: *Nèg se dit pour esclave, et béké pour maître.* Therefore perhaps a more correct translation would be: "The master's eyes burn the slave's eyes." The phrase recalls a curious refrain which used to be sung by Louisiana field-hands:

*Toui, tout, pays blanc—Daniel qui commandé,  
 Daniel qui commandé ça!  
 Daniel qui commandé.*

[“All, all the country white” (white-man's country); “Daniel has so commanded,” etc. I do not know whether the prophet Daniel is referred to.

<sup>3</sup> In the Guyane patois, they say: “*Ça qui gadé gran boi yé kélé pa brûlé yé.*” (*Celui qui regarde une grande boie avec des yeux colères ne les brûle pas.*)

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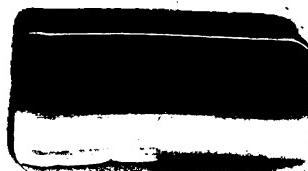
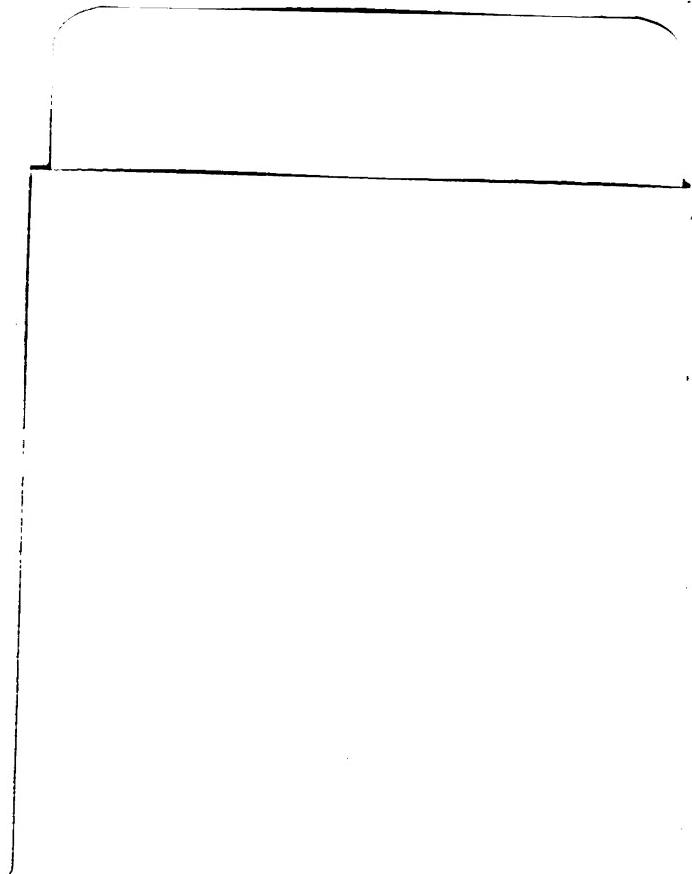


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